

Using Images in Late Antiquity

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Antiquity [Retail]

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Using Images in Late Antiquity



Edited by

Stine Birk, Troels Myrup Kristensen & Birte Poulsen

USING IMAGES IN LATE ANTIQUITY

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STINE BIRK, TROELS MYRUP KRISTENSEN
AND BIRTE POULSEN



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INTRODUCTION

*Stine Birk, Troels Myrup Kristensen and
Birte Poulsen*

Images played a key role in the constitution of late antique society, both in ways that were similar to and markedly different than what can be observed in the period of the early empire. Visual culture in all its different forms was additionally of great importance to the transmission of ideologies, identities, and religions between the different groups and cultures that inhabited the Mediterranean region in the first millennium AD. The overall aim of this volume is to reflect on the active role of art and architecture in Late Antiquity and situate its visual practices within the period's dynamic political, religious, and social life. The volume brings together a diverse body of evidence, including mosaics, sculpture, and architecture, as well as a wide range of interdisciplinary approaches that result in a variety of original and comprehensive case studies of late antique society as seen through its visual culture. Its contributions thus build on the burgeoning field of late antique visual culture which has received major impetus over the last 30 years or so and which furthermore looks set to flourish in future years.

Individual papers illuminate the contexts in which late antique monuments were imbued with different meanings and served as representational media in different contexts.

PAOLO LIVERANI looks at monumental epigraphy and its uses during Late Antiquity.

STINE BIRK gives an overview of the use of portraits for the purposes of self-representation on 3rd- and 4th-century sarcophagi from the city of Rome.

ERIC VARNER explores Constantine's expropriation and symbolic re-use of earlier monuments.

SARAH BASSETT turns to Constantinople and sheds new light on the

- honorific statuary that embellished its streets and urban landscapes.
- LEA STIRLING continues this focus on sculpture and explores the issue of late antique collections of Classical statuary.
- TRINIDAD NOGALES BASARRATE takes us to the province of Hispania and gives an overview of the different uses of sculpture in the colony of Augusta Emerita.
- INE JACOBS investigates the material conditions of traditional religious practices and the topic of civic prosperity during the Theodosian period.
- SIMON MALMBERG presents a comparative account of the use of images in the adornment of triumphal arches and gates at Constantinople, Ravenna, and Rome.
- HENDRIK DEY turns to the ideal of the late antique city and its representation in the medium of mosaics.
- BIRTE POULSEN continues the issue of civic representation and explores late antique city personifications.
- KATHERINE DUNBABIN looks at depictions of mythology and theatre in mosaics from the Eastern part of the Roman Empire.
- ARNALDO MARCONE traces the origins of early Christian iconography and its relationship to Classical traditions.
- TROELS MYRUP KRISTENSEN looks at how Christians visually and textually constructed *topoi* of idolatry from the 4th century onwards.
- KATHARINA MEINECKE discusses the iconography of the richly decorated façade of Qasr al-Mshatta in Jordan as a window into the issue of representation during the Umayyad dynasty.

This volume presents the proceedings of an international conference held at the Accademia di Danimarca in Rome, 13–15 January 2010, organized under the auspices of the research programme ‘Art and Social Identities in Late Antiquity’ (www.lateantiquity.dk), hosted by the Department of Classical Archaeology, Aarhus University, and that received generous funding from the Danish Research Council for Culture and Communication (FKK) and the Faculty of Arts, Aarhus University between 2007 and 2010. The publication constitutes the third and final anthology that arose from the scholarly interests of the core members of the research programme. The previously published anthologies have focused on *Patrons and Viewers in Late Antiquity* (Birk and Poulsen 2012) and *Ateliers and Artisans in Roman Art and Archaeology* (Kristensen and Poulsen 2012).

The editors would like to thank Line Bjerg and Nicola Daumann for their efficient editorial assistance during the preparation of this volume, as well as the staff of the Accademia di Danimarca for all of their support during the conference. We would also like to

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Birk, S. and Poulsen, B. (eds.) (2012) *Patrons and Viewers in Late Antiquity* (Aarhus Studies in Mediterranean Antiquity 10). Aarhus.

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CHI PARLA A CHI? EPIGRAFIA MONUMENTALE E IMMAGINE PUBBLICA IN EPOCA TARDOANTICA

Paolo Liverani

Da sempre si è sottolineato il peso della frontalità dell'immagine in età tardoantica, sia nell'arte figurativa di rappresentanza di ambito civile, che in quella monumentale di ambito cristiano. Raramente, però, questa peculiarità viene analizzata in maniera più approfondita. Immagini frontali, infatti, si presentano in occidente già almeno dall'arte greca arcaica e anche buona parte della ritrattistica predilige la posa frontale. Inoltre, parlando dell'epoca tardoantica, spesso si riassume sotto la rubrica "frontalità" anche una serie di altri elementi compositivi, quali per esempio la proporzione delle immagini stabilita su base gerarchica, nonché la rigidità e la collocazione sull'asse di simmetria centrale della figura dominante (ad esempio Elsner 2000, 259–60).

La frontalità, a ben guardare, ricopre diverse funzioni e significati che possono variare a seconda dell'epoca, del contesto e della funzione dell'immagine. In questa sede non è il caso di tentare una tipologia esaustiva, ma si possono proporre alcuni appunti schematici (Tabella 2.1). Inizierò cercando di delineare le funzioni essenziali, con attenzione specifica – ma non esclusiva – all'età romana. Proverò inoltre a delinearle come polarità oppostive, in modo da garantire la necessaria flessibilità alla classificazione, che potrà prevedere in questo modo casi intermedi tra i due estremi ideali. Si riconoscono dunque:

1. una funzione deittico-ostensiva – evidente ad esempio nei ritratti – con una caratterizzazione attualizzante contrapposta alla dimensione narrativa;
2. una funzione che oscilla tra la polarità interpellante e dialogica a un estremo – si pensi nell'arte paleocristiana alle immagini musive

dei santi o di Cristo rivolti verso il popolo – e all’altro estremo – simmetrica e opposta – la polarità straniente;

Aggiungo a margine che è abbastanza evidente come la funzione autoritativa – si pensi ai casi in cui una figura docente, l’imperatore o la divinità si impongono all’attenzione dello spettatore – ricada come caso particolare nella seconda funzione.

Se iniziamo il nostro breve esame dalla prima funzione e prendiamo il caso del ritratto, dobbiamo sottolineare come esso non possa essere considerato in maniera disgiunta dal contesto in cui si trovava inserito, comprendendovi sia l’apparato figurativo e monumentale che lo circondava, che il corredo epigrafico: in altre parole tutto ciò che ne orientava la lettura con funzione paratestuale.¹ Inoltre è probabilmente banale, ma nonostante tutto fondamentale, osservare che il ritratto romano – sia quello privato funerario che quello pubblico onorario – veniva dedicato da un attore terzo rispetto allo spettatore e al personaggio raffigurato, sia esso un’altra persona o un’istituzione. Ciò risulta chiaramente dalla dedica epigrafica che normalmente accompagnava il ritratto, ove essa si sia conservata. Tale dedica è di norma oggettiva e impersonale: un enunciatore pone il ritratto presentandolo in terza persona allo spettatore-lettore. Questo vale anche nel caso minimo di una semplice didascalia con il nome del personaggio rappresentato, posta al nominativo sotto al ritratto stesso.

Tabella 2.1. Funzioni della frontalità.

FUNZIONI CARATTERIZZAZIONI

1. Attualizzazione <i>Attualizzazione</i>	non narrativa	
2. Indipendenza <i>Indipendenza</i>	vs.	straniante (<i>débrayage</i>)

A una conclusione del tutto simile, d'altronde, si può essere portati anche da elementi puramente figurativi, senza la necessità della presenza di una dedica iscritta. Il solo fatto che un ritratto si adegui a forme codificate e stilizzate – il busto o l'erma, per esempio – lo qualifica come rappresentazione o, per meglio dire, come una forma di presentazione da parte di un terzo attore. Esistono inoltre espedienti figurativi che rafforzano e sottolineano ulteriormente questo aspetto. Se per esempio il ritratto viene inquadrato in una nicchia (Fig. 2.1) o – ancor meglio – in un clipeo (Fig. 2.2), in una conchiglia (Fig. 2.3) o sullo sfondo di un velario (*parapetasma*) (Fig. 2.4), come avviene spesso su are e sarcofagi, tutti questi apparati figurativi funzionano come cornice ossia come il dispositivo che ha la funzione di “chiudere” il testo figurato del ritratto stesso, dotandolo di una sua autonomia (Sul significato della cornice in età moderna Marin 2001,196–221; Stoichita 1998), dunque adempiendo a una funzione metalinguistica. Questo effetto, infine, è ancor più esplicito quando –

per esempio nei sarcofagi – il clipeo con il ritratto del defunto è sostenuto da due figure (Fig. 2.5) – due geni stagionali o due vittorie alate – che amplificano le capacità deittiche della cornice del clipeo stesso. In tal caso anzi abbiamo un'immagine di secondo grado, una figura nella figura. Ciò significa che se il defunto è presentato frontalmente, il destinatario di tale interpellanza frontale, il destinatario del “tu” figurato potremmo dire,² non potrà essere più lo spettatore reale – se non in maniera indiretta e in seconda istanza – in quanto tra spettatore e ritratto si frappone un attore interno alla figurazione di primo grado – il livello cioè delle vittorie o dei geni stagionali.



Fig. 2.1. Ara-cinerario con ritratto entro nicchia (Foto Musei Vaticani).



Fig. 2.2. Ara funeraria con ritratto entro conchiglia (Foto Musei Vaticani).

Sia nel caso di un ritratto accompagnato da dedica iscritta, sia in quello di un clipeo sorretto da due figure, un terzo attore (il dedicante, le vittorie alate, etc.) presenta il defunto o l'onorato allo spettatore. La frontalità di un ritratto, in questo caso, non ha nulla a

che fare con una forma di dialogo o tutt'al più può essere paragonata a un dialogo "nidificato", inserito per così dire tra virgolette in un enunciato di primo livello. Questo perché evidentemente il dialogo – o meglio il suo simulacro – si instaura piuttosto tra chi presenta il defunto (cioè il dedicante, le vittorie etc.) e lo spettatore.

Ciò spiega anche perché spesso questi ritratti abbiamo una frontalità che non interpella direttamente lo spettatore, ma che lo sfugge leggermente: quella che R. Tefnin definisce frontalità "approssimata" (*approchée*) (Tefnin 2003, 126: questo autore le attribuisce però connotazioni psicologiche che non si possono in alcun modo condividere perché estranee a un corretto approccio semiotico).

Nel caso dei clipei retti da due personificazioni abbiamo, inoltre, l'effetto che viene definito di referenzializzazione: (Greimas e Courtés 2007, s.v. *débrayage*, 69–71, specie n. 4 p. 70) in altre parole l'enunciato di secondo grado (il ritratto nel clipeo) esercita un effetto di realtà sull'enunciato di primo grado (quello dei geni o delle vittorie alate), nel senso che dà l'impressione che il racconto reale sia quest'ultimo.



Fig. 2.3. Clipeo con ritratto (Foto Musei Vaticani).



Fig. 2.4. Coperchio di sarcofago con ritratti di una coppia inquadrata da velario (Foto Musei Vaticani).



Fig. 2.5. Sarcofago con Vittorie sorreggenti un clipeo con ritratto non finito, Necropoli di S. Rosa (Foto Musei Vaticani).

Abbiamo così descritto brevemente quella che definisco la frontalità deittica: qualcuno (un parente, il senato, una personificazione astratta...) presenta il defunto o l'onorato allo spettatore-lettore ed è ovvio che la formula più indicata per una presentazione è la frontalità. Come corollario è evidente che questo tipo di frontalità ha la caratteristica di essere attualizzante e statica, ossia non narrativa perché fissata nel presente, un eterno presente sempre rinnovato, quello dello spettatore.

Introduciamo così un ulteriore elemento importante per la nostra analisi, che ci permette un secondo passo. Calare la frontalità nel suo contesto vuol dire anche considerare i tratti differenziali di questa forma, in altri termini tenere conto delle opposizioni che si istituiscono nell'ambito del linguaggio figurativo di una determinata epoca o di una determinata opera. Una figura che si presenti frontalmente può essere intesa intuitivamente come rivolta verso l'osservatore per instaurare con lui un dialogo, o come direbbe É. Benveniste (1971), un "discorso". Associata ai tratti di centralità, simmetria, monumentalità, quelli che abbiamo visto inclusi nella definizione corrente di frontalità tardoantica, un tale dialogo assume caratteri autoritativi, imponendosi allo spettatore.

Se invece la figura è inserita in un complesso più ampio in cui i personaggi appaiono di profilo, essa assume i tratti dell'eccezione e il personaggio raffigurato si astraie dal dialogo che intercorre tra le altre figure del medesimo testo figurato, dalla narrazione che in esso viene sviluppata e che potremmo definire, ancora con É. Benveniste, come "storica". Lo ha mostrato chiaramente F. Frontisi-Ducroux: nella ceramica greca arcaica o classica, dove prevale la raffigurazione di profilo, le figure dei caduti, degli ubriachi o dei dormienti rivolgono il volto verso lo spettatore, interrompendo la relazione con gli altri personaggi raffigurati sullo stesso piano – tutti di profilo – e dunque in questo caso la frontalità è segno di un'assenza, di una rottura, di una separazione.⁴

Al prevalere del primo o del secondo dei due aspetti simmetrici e compresenti della stessa polarità – la funzione dialogica e quella

straniante – il significato della frontalità sarà, come è ovvio, assai differente. Se prendiamo la funzione dialogica, in termini di semiotica generativa, abbiamo a che fare con un *embrayage*, quel procedimento, cioè, che crea un'illusione di compresenza e di contemporaneità tra l'enunciatore – il personaggio figurato – e l'enunciatario – l'osservatore che viene chiamato in causa.⁵

Se invece rivolgiamo la nostra attenzione all'altro polo, alla funzione cioè di rottura e separazione, ne riscontriamo i riflessi anche sulla temporalità. Separarsi dal fluire di un dialogo, che si svolge tra i personaggi di una "storia", significa anche uscire dalla dimensione temporale di quella narrazione per raggiungere una situazione atemporale – come d'altronde avevamo già accennato in precedenza. Se, dunque, una narrazione di profilo ha una connotazione "storica", che potremmo considerare prevalentemente legata al passato, la frontalità se ne stacca e può esprimere una dimensione altra: lo abbiamo visto per la morte, l'ebbrezza o il sonno nella ceramica greca, ma prendendo in esame il patrimonio figurativo tardoantico e paleocristiano, questo infrangere la relazione, questo rifugiarsi in una relazione altra, si può ritrovare nello schema dell'orante, (Plate 1) in posa frontale con le braccia sollevate in preghiera. La figura orante si astrae da quanto la circonda per accedere a una dimensione differente, salvifica, per porsi alla presenza di Dio. In un certo senso si tratta di una forma estrema di frontalità, un rivolgersi al di fuori del piano narrativo in cui si trova iscritta l'immagine, superando – per così dire – lo spettatore stesso, per rivolgersi "al di sopra delle sue spalle" all'assolutamente altro. Lo schema, infatti, viene utilizzato fin dalle prime fasi dell'arte paleocristiana per personaggi dell'Antico Testamento, come i tre fanciulli ebrei nella fornace, come Noè, Daniele, Susanna.⁶

Tutti questi personaggi sfuggono a una situazione di pericolo (la condanna di Nabucodonosor, il diluvio, la fossa dei leoni, l'accusa dei vecchioni) portati dalla loro fede e dalla loro preghiera alla salvezza e, in qualche modo, al cospetto o alla visione di Dio. Lo stesso può dirsi nel caso di personaggi del Nuovo Testamento guariti miracolosamente, o – soprattutto – per i defunti o i santi, che si trovano ormai nella visione beatifica e in una condizione paradisiaca (cfr. Bisconti 2000, s.v. Orante, 235–36). Simmetricamente anche nella figura del Cristo (Plate 2) può essere riconosciuta una simile frontalità, che potremmo definire "assoluta", che non si focalizza cioè su uno spettatore specifico, ma che abbraccia tutto il popolo presente nell'aula liturgica e anzi va oltre i limiti dell'assemblea particolare. È quello che spiega già Nicola Mesarite (XIV.4), attorno al 1200, nella descrizione del Cristo Pantocratore della basilica dei Ss. Apostoli a Costantinopoli (cfr. Downey 1957):

Πρᾶόν τε τὸ βλέμμα καὶ τὸ ὅλον προσήνεια, οὐκ ἐπαρίστερα βλέπον οὐδ' ὑπερδέξια, ὀλικῶς δε ἅμα πρὸς ἅπαντας καὶ πρὸς τὸν καθέκαστον μερικῶς.

«Lo sguardo è gentile e in tutto dolce, non è rivolto né a destra né a sinistra, ma interamente a tutti e allo stesso tempo a ciascuno individualmente».

Proviamo a riesprimere quanto si è detto finora in maniera sintetica e con categorie leggermente diverse. La frontalità può assumere, a seconda dei contesti, diverse funzioni, tra le quali possiamo elencare nell'ambito che ci interessa, in maniera incompleta e a titolo esemplificativo:

1. una funzione *deittica*, la presentazione cioè di una terza persona,
- 2a. una funzione *fatica*, che serve a stabilire un collegamento tra immagine e spettatore in forma di dialogo,
- 2b. una funzione *straniante*, che cioè segnala il distacco, l'assenza, la rottura di relazione, per dare accesso a una relazione e a una temporalità differente.⁷

Esistono però anche sfumature intermedie tra la posizione frontale e quella di profilo che andrebbero esplorate e che possono avere un significato: se ne presenterà solo una particolarmente caratteristica a titolo d'esempio. Prendiamo il mosaico dell'abside dei Ss. Cosma e Damiano a Roma, (Plate 2) dove i santi Pietro e Paolo introducono i due santi titolari di fronte al Cristo centrale e frontale. Qui Pietro e Paolo sono in una sorta di tensione e di torsione: da un lato rivolgono il loro sguardo allo spettatore, all'assemblea dei fedeli raccolta nella navata, dall'altra con il loro gesto e con il loro movimento si muovono verso il Cristo centrale e così facendo invitano i fedeli a fare lo stesso. Con un piede fermo e frontale e l'altro di profilo in movimento mostrano la loro posizione a metà tra l'umanità e la divinità, una funzione di mediazione e di intercessione che dunque possiamo aggiungere alla nostra tipologia. È interessante notare come questo ruolo non sia molto lontano da quel patronato celeste identificato dagli studi di P. Brown nella concezione della santità tardoantica, che costituisce una novità del culto cristiano rispetto alla mentalità pagana, dove le figure intermedie tra l'umano e il divino, gli eroi e i semidei, erano invece collocati decisamente sul versante divino (Brown, 1970; 1983. Secondo questa ricostruzione una tale funzione si può ricavare con chiarezza dalle fonti scritte solo a partire dalla fine del IV sec.).

In termini semiotici queste figure sono delegati dello spettatore, proiettati nell'enunciato figurativo per mostrare la modalità con cui ci si deve rivolgere al Cristo,⁸ una funzione dunque parenetica ed

esortativa. In un certo senso santie dedicante sono i capofila della processione liturgica dei fedeli orientata verso il Cristo.

Dopo questa trattazione complessa e un po' pedante del testo figurato, vediamo l'altra componente del nostro discorso, il testo scritto, con particolare attenzione all'epigrafia monumentale, per la quale mi rimane purtroppo uno spazio assai più limitato di quel che sarebbe necessario e che mi costringerà a una stringatezza che spero non sia considerata troppo ermetica. Anche l'epigrafia monumentale, infatti, conosce contemporaneamente un'evoluzione che non è stata sufficientemente valorizzata. L'epigrafia monumentale classica aveva un carattere oggettivo, distaccato e impersonale: un enunciatore anonimo e non meglio definito informava un lettore altrettanto anonimo e indefinito del destinatario, del dedicante e delle motivazioni della dedica. Tale schema comunicativo, soprattutto nelle basiliche paleocristiane, viene sovvertito e cede il passo in numerosi casi a una comunicazione personale e soggettiva – nel senso che coinvolge e identifica emittente e destinatario – secondo un tipo di comunicazione che precedentemente era sostanzialmente confinata all'epigrafia privata e soprattutto funeraria (Roueché 1997). Si pensi al “tu”, che apostrofa il passante, o all'augurio tradizionale: “*sit tibi terra levis*”, che il passante faceva suo leggendolo e rivolgendosi al defunto (cfr. l'indice di H. Dessau, *ILS* III.2, p. 847: *Acclamations sepulcrales*; Lattimore 1942, 266–300).

Si può costruire una tipologia enunciazionale, cioè una tipologia che non tenga conto del contenuto della comunicazione – di che cosa si parla o, più tecnicamente, dell'enunciato – ma piuttosto della relazione – o meglio, trattandosi di testi scritti, del simulacro di relazione – che si instaura tra emittente e destinatario. Detto altrimenti, invece che partire dalla domanda “che cosa dice il testo?” chiederò ai testi: “chi parla a chi?”. Anticipando per ragioni di chiarezza l'argomento a cui mira il mio discorso, dirò subito che il punto più interessante di questo tentativo risiede nell'integrazione tra le novità nella comunicazione attraverso l'immagine con quella che passa attraverso i testi epigrafici, in quanto le due modalità, compresenti in età tarda, non possono più essere considerate semplicemente come ridondanti o complementari, ma instaurano un'interazione sia tra di loro, che con lo spettatore-lettore, il quale viene costituito come tale, attivando la dimensione pragmatica della comunicazione.

Per questo motivo utilizzerò esempi in cui abbiamo la compresenza reale o ragionevolmente presumibile di testo e immagine. Ciò comporta il notevole vantaggio di verificare parallelamente sui due linguaggi con diverse metodologie la medesima ipotesi. Utilizzerò la traccia che si deve a un grande studioso della letteratura italiana,

dotato inoltre di particolare sensibilità per gli aspetti figurativi, G. Pozzi.⁹ Da un punto di vista teorico, infatti, si possono avere quattro situazioni comunicative fondamentali:

- a) dialogo tra gli attori del racconto figurato: si ha un discorso mimetico di tipo teatrale;
- b) un attore della figurazione (enunciatore) si rivolge a un destinatario fuori campo (enunciatario): si crea così una situazione didattica, parenetica (atto perlocutorio) o augurale;
- c) un attore fuori campo si rivolge a un attore della figurazione: è in genere la situazione della preghiera di richiesta (atto perlocutorio), della lode (atto illocutorio) o di acclamazione;
- d) un enunciatore fuori campo si rivolge a un enunciatario anch'egli fuori campo con una narrazione didascalica (atto cognitivo);

Qui sarebbe forse necessaria una digressione sulle basi metodologiche di questo tentativo che sono quelle della teoria dell'enunciazione, ma appesantirei e allungherei eccessivamente la trattazione. D'altronde alcuni principi sono abbastanza intuitivi, se ci si limita a una prima generale descrizione. Propongo quindi la tipologia che segue, avvertendo che si tratta di una forma semplificata, una prima approssimazione che non tiene conto di diversi parametri di cui potrebbe e dovrebbe essere arricchita. I termini che impiego nello schema li ho già introdotti nel discorso che precede, mi resta solo da chiarire che utilizzo la definizione "attante" per designare il ruolo ricoperto nella comunicazione da enunciatore ed enunciatario nella forma più generale e indipendentemente dalla sua incarnazione in un concreto attore (Tabella 2.2).

Tabella 2.2. Tipologia enunciazionale.

TIPO	SCHEMA	ESEMPI	ATTIANTI	ENUNCIATO
A1	situazione didascalica	Arco di Costantino: <i>CIL</i> VI 1139	enunciatore ed enunciatario esterni impersonali	storia
A2	situazione didattica, parenetica o augurale	S. Pietro (abside): <i>ICUR</i> II 4094	enunciatore ed enunciatario esterni personali	discorso
B	preghiera, lode o acclamazione	S. Pietro (arco trionfale): <i>ICUR</i> II 4092; Obelisco di Costanzo II: <i>CIL</i> VI 1163	enunciatore esterno, enunciatario interno entrambi personali	discorso
C	situazione didattica, parenetica	<i>Flavius Agricola</i> <i>CLE</i> 856; S. Pietro (facciata): <i>ICUR</i> II 4123	enunciatore interno, enunciatario esterno	discorso
D	dialogo tra attori	S. Maria Maggiore, dedica di Sisto III: <i>ILCV</i> 976; S. Agnese, dedica di Costantina: <i>ICUR</i> VIII 20752	enunciatore ed enunciatario interni personali	discorso nificato

Proviamo a commentare la tipologia aggiungendo gli esempi necessari a comprendere la forma un po' astratta della tabella e a trarne alla fine almeno delle conclusioni generali e delle tracce per futuri approfondimenti. Sceglierò una parte significativa dei miei esempi dalla basilica di S. Pietro, sia perché costituisce un caso che conosciamo in maniera sufficientemente completa e organica, benché ovviamente l'iconografia dei mosaici paleocristiani sia ricostruibile solo con approssimazione, sia perché è un esempio particolarmente precoce e autorevole che ha influenzato numerose realizzazioni successive.

Tipo A1

Ho chiamato A1, con enunciatore ed enunciatario esterni impersonali, il tipo che nello schema proposto dal Pozzi si troverebbe all'ultimo posto perché esso abbraccia la massima parte dei casi nell'epigrafia pubblica fin dall'età repubblicana. Per non allontanarci troppo dell'epoca da cui attingo gli esempi per gli altri tipi, pensiamo all'arco di Costantino (*CIL* VI 1139 = 31245):

*Imp(eratori) Caes(ari) Fl(avio) Constantino maximo / p(io)
f(elici) Augusto S(enatus) P(opulus)q(ue) R(omanus) / quod
instinctu divinitatis mentis / magnitudine cum exercitu suo / tam
de tyranno quam de omni eius / factione uno tempore
iustis / rempublicam ultus est armis / arcum triumphis insignem
dicavit.*

Qui l'enunciatore non è dichiarato e l'enunciatario è – in prima approssimazione – colui che legge l'iscrizione, dunque – potremmo dire – il popolo romano, ma ciò è deducibile unicamente dalla situazione, senza cioè che questi ruoli siano indicati in modo esplicito dal testo vero e proprio dell'iscrizione. Ciò è dovuto alla forma impersonale e “oggettiva”, che esclude programmaticamente o maschera ogni accenno a questi due attanti (Tabella 2.3).

Se dal piano dell'enunciazione passiamo a quello dell'enunciato, trattandosi di un'iscrizione dedicatoria troviamo in primo piano altri due attanti: un destinante – cioè il dedicante – e il destinatario della dedica. Nel caso dell'arco si tratta rispettivamente del Senato e dell'imperatore Costantino e inoltre sono esplicitati sia il motivo della dedica (*quod ... rempublicam ultus est armis*), che il suo oggetto (*arcum triumphis insignem*). Il destinatario della dedica (Costantino) è presente nell'apparato figurativo, ma non c'è alcuna relazione necessaria tra il testo verbale della dedica principale e le figurazioni.¹⁰

Tipo A2

Nel tipo A2 enunciatore ed enunciatario sono ancora esterni, ma tuttavia non sono sottintesi, bensì espressi attraverso marche enunciazionali (quelli che Jakobson 1966, 149–53 chiama *shifters* e più genericamente vengono definiti indicali: Raynaud 2006). Prenderò come esempio l'iscrizione del mosaico absidale della basilica vaticana di S. Pietro (Fig. 2.6).¹¹

ICUR II 4094

*Iustitiae sedes, fidei domus, aula pudoris,
haec est quam cernis pietas quam possidet omnis,
quae patris et filii virtutibus inclyta gaudet
auctoremque suum genitoris laudibus aequat*

«Sede di giustizia, dimora della fede, aula del pudore,
tale è quel che vedi, quel che ogni pietà possiede,
che nella sua gloria si rallegra delle virtù del padre e del
figlio
e rende pari il suo autore alle lodi del genitore»

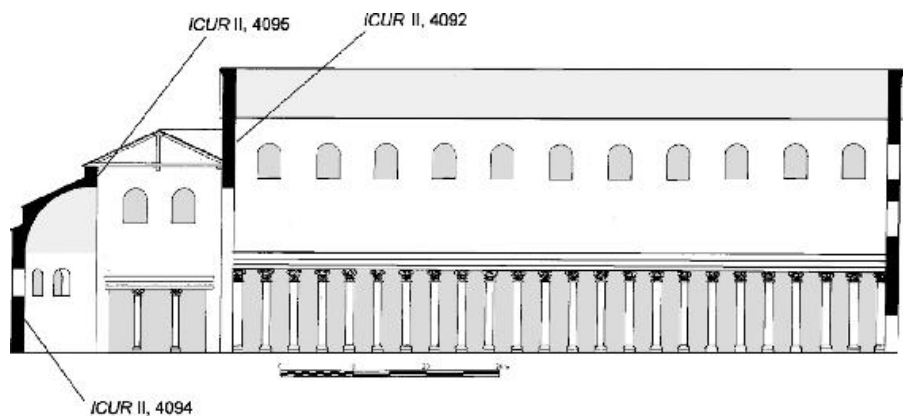


Fig. 2.6. Basilica di S. Pietro, posizione delle iscrizioni absidali ICUR II, 4094–4095 e di quella sull’arcone trionfale ICUR II, 4092 (rielaborazione da Arbeiter).

Per non ripetere cose già dette, sorvolo sulle lunghe discussioni che ha generato l’interpretazione del testo – a mio parere costantiniano – ma aggiungo che nella stessa abside doveva trovarsi un mosaico, che la maggior parte degli studiosi identifica con una *Traditio legis* (Moretti 2006, 2a.). Il dettaglio è secondario: infatti in questo caso – così come nell’arco di Costantino – non sembra esistere un rapporto necessario ed evidente tra figurazione musiva e iscrizione. Nel testo dell’abside un enunciatore anonimo apostrofa con il “tu” il lettore-spettatore e identifica l’oggetto di cui parla – la basilica nel suo complesso – collegandolo alla situazione di enunciazione mediante un deittico: “questo è ciò che vedi” (*haec est quam cernis*) (in termini tecnici si tratta di un *embrayage* attanziale e di un *embrayage* spaziale). In altre parole il testo è ancorato al “qui e ora” della situazione del lettore, che viene interpellato personalmente. La differenza di forma corrisponde a una differenza sostanziale. Nell’arco di Costantino a una comunicazione impersonale corrisponde una prevalente funzione referenziale:¹² un enunciatore inespresso fornisce al lettore una serie di informazioni sull’arco stesso, sul dedicante e sul destinatario.

L’iscrizione dell’abside di S. Pietro, invece, solo con una discreta forzatura potrebbe essere catalogata tra le dediche, in quanto dedicante e dedicatario sono ricordati in maniera allusiva: solo grazie all’inferenza intertestuale delle altre iscrizioni monumentali musive della basilica e – più in generale – al contesto architettonico, il lettore antico capiva che *l’auctor* – il dedicante appunto – era Costantino e che il dedicatario, era Cristo. D’altra parte, proprio la struttura discorsiva della comunicazione fa passare in secondo piano la funzione referenziale e porta invece in primo piano altre funzioni linguistiche – utilizzo qui la ben nota classificazione di R. Jakobson – e cioè la funzione espressiva o emotiva, quella poetica – ovvia in un

testo in esametri – e quella conativa.¹³ Come si vede la scelta formale ha conseguenze funzionali sulla comunicazione, o per dir meglio, sono le scelte funzionali della committenza che impongono la selezione di una determinata forma. Inoltre, per quel che riguarda in particolare l'iscrizione dell'abside di S. Pietro, essa andava probabilmente letta insieme a una seconda iscrizione che correva sull'arco dell'abside, che forniva le informazioni necessarie, probabilmente nelle forme di una dedica tradizionale (tipo A1).

Tabella 2.3. Comparazione tra i tipi A1 e A2.

TIPO A1	
Arco di Costantino (forma impersonale, oggettiva → funzione referenziale)	
<u>Imp(eratori) Caes(ari) Fl(avio) Constantino maximo</u>	<u>Destinatario</u>
<u>p(ri)o f(f)elici Augusto Stenatus P(opulus)q(ue) R(omanus)</u>	<u>Dedicante</u>
<i>quod instinctu divinitatis mentis</i>	
<i>magnitudine cum exercitu suo</i>	
<i>tam de tyranno quam de omni eius</i>	
<i>factione uno tempore iustis</i>	
<i>republicam ultus est armis</i>	Motivo della dedica
<u>arcum triumphis insignem</u> <i>dicavit</i>	<u>Oggetto della dedica</u>
TIPO A2	
Abside di S. Pietro (forma personale, soggettiva → funzioni espressiva, poetica, conativa)	
<i>Iustitiae sedes, fidei domus, aula pudoris,</i>	
<i>haec est quam cernis pietas quam possidet omnis,</i>	
<i>quae patris et filii virtutibus inelyta gaudet</i>	
<u>auctoremque suum genitoris laudibus aequat</u>	

ICUR II 4095

Costantini expiata (...) hostili incursione

(cfr. Krautheimer 1989, 9–15; Liverani 2008, 159). Potrei citare qui una serie di iscrizioni prive di contesto figurato, me ne astengo per brevità e aggiungo solo che abbiamo a che fare con enunciati performativi, che si rivolgono a uno spettatore per informarlo e formarlo, ossia disporlo in una determinata situazione di recezione, stimolando la sua attenzione, la sua meraviglia, chiedendogli di fare qualche cosa (guardare, pregare etc.). Mentre a Roma sembra che questo tipo di dedica sia utilizzato sostanzialmente in ambito religioso, a Costantinopoli si trovano diversi esempi di dediche onorarie civili (Horster 1998; Bauer 2007).

Tipo B

Ancora più interessante e nuovo è il tipo B, quello cioè che prevede un enunciatore esterno al testo e un enunciatario interno. L'esempio migliore è costituito dal mosaico dell'arco trionfale di S. Pietro e dal suo distico (*ICUR* II 4092. Cfr. Krautheimer 1989, 7–9; Liverani 2006; 2007, 238–41; 2008, 155–59) (Fig. 2.6):

ICUR II 4092

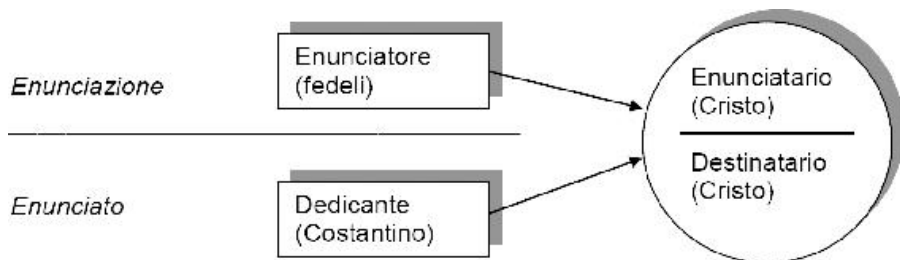
*Quod duce te mundus surrexit in astra triumphans
hanc Constantinus Victor tibi condidit aulam*

«Poiché sotto la tua guida il mondo s'innalzò trionfante verso
gli astri
Costantino Vincitore ti costruì questa basilica»

Questa iscrizione era strettamente integrata – a differenza del tipo A – con il soggetto della figurazione: il mosaico infatti doveva raffigurare Cristo Kosmokrator tra S. Pietro e Costantino, il quale offriva il modellino della basilica (la descrizione si deve a Giacobacci 1537, 783; cfr. Frothingham 1883; cfr. inoltre Liverani 2006, 90–91, n. 25; 2007, 238–41; 2008, 155–59). Anche in questo caso sono costretto a sorvolare sulle discussioni tecniche relative alla datazione del mosaico, che ho già affrontato altrove.

Qui l'enunciatore è evidentemente il popolo, o forse il celebrante con l'assemblea dei fedeli, che parlano in prima persona, mentre l'enunciatario è Cristo, a cui ci si rivolge con la seconda persona. Se prendiamo in considerazione anche il piano dell'enunciato è chiaro che a questo livello il dedicante è Costantino e il destinatario coincide con l'enunciatario. in quanto è ancora una volta Cristo. Possiamo tradurre i rapporti tra i vari attanti nel seguente schema riassuntivo:

Tabella 2.4. Schema attanziale dell'iscrizione dell'arcone trionfale di S. Pietro.



È evidente che i ruoli nella metà sinistra dello schema sono quelli attivi, mentre quelli nella metà destra sono passivi. La novità e la differenza rispetto sia alle dediche impersonali, come quella dell'arco

di Costantino (tipo A1), sia a quelle del tipo A2, in cui il lettore viene interpellato con il tu, sta nel fatto che mentre in esse l'enunciario implicito – cioè il lettore – riceve passivamente l'informazione, nel caso dell'arcone trionfale lo stesso lettore, per il solo fatto di leggere il testo dell'iscrizione, è preso dal meccanismo dialogico predisposto dal testo ed è costretto ad assumere un ruolo attivo, quello dell'enunciatore che si rivolge a Cristo, anzi al Cristo raffigurato nel mosaico.

Possiamo rintracciare qualche precedente pagano a questo schema: oltre alle iscrizioni funerarie, a cui si è già accennato, in cui il *viator* rivolgeva il suo augurio al defunto, esistono alcuni casi di dediche sacre,¹⁴ ma anche una dedica a Gaio e Lucio Cesare da Acerra (*CIL* X 3757; Letta 2002; 2 a.C.-2 d.C). Per esse possiamo forse supporre che la forma diretta con cui viene interpellato il destinatario sia dovuta alla presenza del suo simulacro. Non esiste, però, nulla di così monumentale e integrato all'immagine come l'iscrizione vaticana.

In epoca successiva – nella seconda metà del IV sec. – ma in ambito laico e privato, si colloca il famoso mosaico di Dougga con l'auriga Eros,¹⁵ rappresentato frontalmente, al quale è rivolta l'acclamazione: *Eros / omnia per te*, uno slogan sportivo che, come avviene anche oggi, si avvicina alle invocazioni religiose. Casi analoghi si riconoscono su due mosaici di Merida di analoga datazione, con la raffigurazione frontale di una quadriga ciascuno e un'iscrizione che incita l'auriga alla vittoria: rispettivamente *Paulus nica* e *Marcianus nicha* (Blanco 1978, 45–6, tav. 104, n. 43 B; Dunbabin 1982, 74, 88, n. 12, tav. 8.15–16; Gomez Pallarès 1997, 72–74, BA 9, tav. 20). La compresenza dell'iscrizione e dell'immagine frontale chiarisce che siamo di fronte a un dialogo dello spettatore-lettore con l'auriga.

Interessanti i casi di ambito laico e politico: il più importante è di poco successivo al mosaico dell'arco di S. Pietro ed è assai famoso. Alludo alla dedica dell'obelisco di Costanzo II al Circo Massimo:

*Patris opus munusqu[e suum] tibi Roma dicavit
Augustus [toto Constan]tius orbe recepto
et quod nulla tulit tellus nec viderat aetas
condidit ut claris exa[equ]et dona triumphis.*

- 5 *Hoc decus ornatum genitor cognominis Urbis
esse volens caesa Thebis de rupe revellit.
Sed gravior divum tangebatur cura vehendi
quod nullo ingenio nisuque manuque moveri
caucaseam molem discurrens fama monebat.*

- 10 *At dominus mundi Constantius omnia fretus
cedere virtuti terris incedere iussit
haut partem exigua montis pontoq(ue) tumentis*

*credidit et placido vexerunt aequora fluctu
 litus ad hesperium [Tiberi] mirante carinam*
 15 *interea Romam ta[et]ro vastante tyranno
 Augusti iacuit donum studiumque locandi
 non fastu spreti sed quod non crederet ullus
 tantae molis opus superas consurgere in auras.
 Nunc veluti rursus ruf[is] avulsa metallis*
 20 *emicuit pulsatque polos haec gloria dudum
 auctori servata suo cum caede tyranni
 redditur atque aditu Ro[mae vi]rtute reperto
 victor ovans Urbiq[ue locat sublim]e tropaeum
 principis et munus condi[gnis claris]que triumphis.*

Il testo utilizzato differisce lievemente nelle integrazioni da *CIL* VI 1163; assieme alla traduzione sono quelli proposti in Liverani (2012):

«L'opera del padre e il [suo] dono a te Roma dedicò Costanzo Augusto, una volta sottomesso [tutto] il globo, e ciò che nessuna terra portò, né alcuna età aveva visto (a te) eresse perché i doni fossero pari ai famosi trionfi.

5 Volendo il genitore che questo ornamento fosse decoro della città che porta il suo nome, lo tolse dalla rupe tagliata a Tebe.

Ma la preoccupazione del trasporto affliggeva grandemente il divo, poiché da nessun ingegno e sforzo e mano sarebbe stata mossa la caucasea mole: (così) ammoniva la fama che si spandeva qua e là.

10 Invece il signore del mondo, Costanzo, convinto che tutto ceda al valore, comandò che si muovesse sulle terre la non piccola parte di monte e ripose la sua fiducia nel mare rigonfio e le acque, con placida onda, condussero la nave alle spiagge d'Occidente, con meraviglia del [Tevere].

15 Nel mentre che (te) Roma devastava un tetro tiranno, rimase a giacere il dono così come la preoccupazione dell'Augusto per la sua collocazione: non per orgoglioso disprezzo, ma perché nessuno credeva che un'opera di tanta mole potesse levarsi alle aure celesti.

Ora, come di nuovo strappata alle cave rossegianti

20 questa gloria a lungo conservata brillò e tocca i cieli; una volta morto il tiranno viene restituita al suo committente e, trovato con il valore l'accesso a Roma, il vincitore esultante [affida al tempo stesso l'altissimo] trofeo del principe alla città e il (suo) dono [agli illustri] trionfi di pari dignità»

Possiamo considerarla una sorta di panegirico, che riprende temi e

immagini non solo dall'iscrizione sull'arco trionfale della basilica vaticana, ma anche da quella absidale della stessa basilica.¹⁶ Non mi posso dilungare sulla questione che ho affrontato altrove. Basterà dire che la lode dell'imperatore viene pronunciata dal lettore del testo, che assume la veste di enunciatore e interloquisce in questo caso con Roma, anziché con Cristo. La forma dialogica è espressa immediatamente dal *tibi* della prima riga e rafforzata dai deittici presenti nel testo: *hoc decus, haec gloria, nunc*. Inoltre non ci si rivolge a un'immagine musiva, ma alla città vera e propria, che si manifesta nella presenza dei cittadini assiepati nel Circo Massimo per acclamare l'imperatore. Tenendo presente questo *Sitz im Leben*, il lettore si fa portavoce del popolo romano raccolto nel Circo e allo stesso tempo lo invita implicitamente ad associarsi a lui nella lode, orientandone l'attenzione e la disposizione. Anche Costantinopoli offre diversi esempi, ma – per quanto mi è stato possibile di vedere finora – di data un poco successiva.¹⁷

Tornando invece in ambito cristiano, potremmo ricordare l'iscrizione musiva pavimentale nell'aula meridionale di Teodoro ad Aquileia (Plate 3),¹⁸ appena di poco precedente a quella vaticana, che presuppone forse un'immagine (perduta) del vescovo costruttore della basilica sulla parete del presbiterio.¹⁹

Trascurando alcuni ulteriori esempi si può arrivare all'arco della basilica pelagiana di S. Lorenzo fuori le mura (Plate 4),²⁰ che richiama in maniera cosciente e puntuale l'arco trionfale della basilica vaticana attraverso l'iconografia, mentre l'iscrizione è una specie di calco del modello petrino. Anche in questo caso, infatti, si tratta di un distico elegiaco che interpella con il tu il destinatario della dedica, Lorenzo martire questa volta invece del Cristo del mosaico vaticano, e che – esattamente come nel suo modello – dà la motivazione della dedica nel primo verso e menziona l'edificio basilicale nel secondo (*ILS* 1771; Ihm 1960, n. 6):

*Martyrium flammis olim levita subisti
Iure tuis templis lux veneranda redit.*

«Hai subito una volta da sacerdote il martirio della fiamma / (ora) a buon diritto la luce veneranda ritorna nei tuoi templi».

Tipo C

Arriviamo ad affrontare quel tipo di enunciato in cui l'enunciatore è interno e si rivolge a un enunciatario esterno. La situazione si verifica già con una certa frequenza in vari ambiti differenti e in epoca

alquanto anteriore a quella principalmente considerata in questo contributo: tra le statue funerarie parlanti il migliore esempio è quella di età antonina che segnava la deposizione di *Flavius Agricola*,²¹ nel sepolcro R della Necropoli sotto la basilica di S. Pietro in Vaticano.²²

*Tibur mihi patria, Agricola sum vocitatus
Flavius, idem ego sum discumbens, ut me videtis,
sic et apud superos annis, quibus fata dedere,
animulam colui nec defuit umqua Lyaeus.
Praecessitque prior Primitiva gratissima coniuncx
Flavia et ipsa, cultrix deae Phariaes casta,
sedulaque et forma decore repleta,
cum qua ter denos dulcissimos egerim annos.
Solaciumque sui generis Aurelium Primitivum
tradidit, qui pietate sua coleret fastigia nostra,
hospitiumque mihi secura servavit in aevum.
Amici qui legitis moneo miscete Lyaeum
et potate procul redimiti tempora flore
et venereos coitus formosis ne denegate puellis;
cetera post obitum terra consumit et ignis.*

«Tivoli è patria per me, io sono l'Agricola che chiamano / Flavio: proprio io sono qui a giacere, come mi vedete; / così pure tra i mortali, negli anni che i fati (mi) concessero, / coltivai la mia animuccia, né mai fui a corto della bevanda di Bacco. / E prima mi precedette Primitiva, moglie diletteissima, / Flavia ella stessa, devota della casta dea Iside, / tanto premurosa quanto piena di dignità nell'aspetto, / con la quale trascorsi tre decine di anni dolcissimi. / E a compenso della sua stirpe mi lasciò Aurelio Primitivo, / che coltivasse con la sua devozione i nostri onori, / e serena mi serbò una dimora per sempre. / Amici che leggete vi esorto: versate il liquore di Bacco / e bevete molto, cingete le tempie di fiori / e l'unione di Venere non rifiutate alle belle fanciulle; / dopo la morte terra e fuoco consumano il resto» (P. Liverani)

In ambito pubblico il tipo C è presente su monumenti di grande importanza: si pensi al mosaico a soggetto apocalittico, presente sulla facciata della basilica di S. Pietro in Vaticano e risalente all'età di papa Leone Magno (440–461) (per quanto segue rimando al mio contributo Liverani 2008; per la bibliografia precedente cfr. anche la sintesi di Bordi 2006). Tra le varie figurazioni doveva essere compresa anche una immagine di Costantino corredata da una lunga iscrizione metrica.²³

*Credite victuras anima remeante favillas
 rursus ad amissum posse redire diem.
 Nam vaga bis quinos iam luna resumpserat orbes
 nutabat dubia cum mihi morte salus
 inrita letiferos auxit medicina dolores
 crevit et humana morbus ab arte meus.
 O quantum Petro largitur Christus honorem
 ille dedit vitam reddidit iste mihi.*

«Credete che con il ritorno dell'anima le ceneri destinate alla vittoria possono tornare nuovamente alla luce perduta! Infatti la luna errabonda già due volte aveva ricominciato le quintuplici orbite, per me l'incerta salvezza si inchinava vacillante verso la morte. La medicina inefficace aumentò i dolori mortali e il mio morbo crebbe a causa dell'arte di origine umana. Oh, di quale onore Pietro è stato gratificato da Cristo! Quegli mi diede la vita, questi me la restituì.»

Quel che interessa è che il discorso in prima persona è fortemente didattico e parenetico e fonda il suo valore e impatto sul prestigio dell'enunciatore, in questo caso nientemeno che l'imperatore Costantino, già assunto alla gloria dei cieli.

Negli stessi anni in oriente si può ricordare ad Afrodisia la statua di Flavio Eutolmio Taziano,²⁴ dedicata dal nipote entro il 450 (PLRE I Tatianus 5).

τίς; πόθεν; ἐκ Λυκίης μέ[ν], | ἀριστεύσας δ' ἐνὶ θώκοις |
 Τατιανὸς θεομοῖς τε δίκης | πτολίεθρα ξαώσας. vac. |
 ἀλλὰ με πανδαμάτωρ χρόν[ος] | ὥλλυεν, εἰ μὴ ἐμὸς παῖς |
 ἐξ ἐμέθεν τρίτατος καὶ | ὁμώνυμος ἔργα θ' ὁμοιο[ς] |
 ἐκ δαπέδων ἀνελών | στήλης ἔπι θῆκεν ὀραῖσθ[αι] |
 πᾶσιν ἀριζήλον ναέταις | ξίνοισει θ' ὁμοίως vac. |
 Καρῶν ἐκ γέης ὃς ἀπῆλασε | λοίγιον ἄτην vac. |
 τὴν δὲ δίκην μερόπεσιν | ὁμέστιον ὥπας ἐπεῖναι |
 πεμφθεὶς ἐκ βασιλῆος | ἔθ' ἀδομένοισιν ἀρωγός.

Tipo D

Arriviamo infine all'ultimo caso: quello, cioè, in cui enunciatore ed enunciatario sono entrambi interni al testo. Il primo esempio da ricordare in età tarda è ancora costantiniano ed è costituito dalla

dedica della figlia Costantina della basilica di S. Agnese sulla via Nomentana a Roma:

ICUR VIII 20752

*Constantina deum venerans Christo(ue) dicata,
omnibus impensis devota mente paratis,
numine divino multum Christo(ue) iuvante
sacravi templum victricis virginis Agnes
templorum quod vincit opus terrena(ue) cuncta
aurea quae rutilant summi fastigia tecti
nomen enim Christi celebratur sedibus istis,
tartaream solus potuit qui vincere mortem,
inventus caelo solus(ue) inferre triumphum,
nomen Adae referens et corpus et omnia membra
a mortis tenebris et caeca nocte levata
dignum igitur munus, martyr, devota(ue) Christo,
ex opibus nostris per secula longa tenebis,
o felix virgo memorandi nominis Agnes*
«Io Costantina che venero Dio e son dedicata a Cristo,
preparato ogni impegno con mente devota,
per volontà divina e con grande ausilio da Cristo,
consacrai il tempio della vergine vincitrice Agnese
che vince l'arte dei templi e tutti gli aurei fastigi
terreni dell'altissimo tetto rifulgenti:
il nome di Cristo, infatti, si celebra in queste sedi,
il solo che poté vincere la morte del Tartaro
entrato in cielo e il solo a riportare il trionfo,
il nome di Adamo e il corpo restituendo e tutte le membra
liberate dalle tenebre della morte e dalla cieca notte.
Degna offerta quindi, o martire e devota a Cristo,
dalle nostre risorse per lunghi secoli terrai,
o felice vergine dal nome memorabile di Agnese».

Non conosciamo il contesto figurato di questa iscrizione, nota purtroppo solo attraverso la tradizione manoscritta,²⁵ ma – se le indicazioni desumibili dal testo sono da prendere sul serio – dobbiamo ricostruire anche in questo caso uno schema a tre figure con Costantina che si rivolge alla santa – forse anche in questo caso con il modello della basilica in mano – di fronte a Cristo che è la figura centrale del componimento e del quale si sottolinea la venerazione. Se una tale ricostruzione coglie nel segno il dialogo interno intercorre tra due attori interni alla figurazione.

Un esempio che potrebbe ancora rientrare nel IV sec. si ha a Roma, nella basilica di S. Lorenzo in Damaso:²⁶ nell'abside si trovava un

distico dello stesso Damaso: *Haec Damasus tibi, Chr(ist)e deus, nova tecta dicavi / Laurenti saeptus martyris auxilio* (Ferrua 1942, 212, n. 58). Si notano evidenti somiglianze con il distico dell'arcone trionfale della basilica vaticana: la sua prima riga è un calco della seconda riga dell'arcone di S. Pietro. Tuttavia sono forti le differenze in quanto in questo caso è il vescovo che parla in prima persona e dunque si colloca in un tipo enunciazionale differente. La seconda riga dell'iscrizione damasiana, inoltre, fa pensare che il verso corrispondesse all'immagine musiva di Damaso – eventualmente con in mano il modellino della chiesa – accompagnato dal martire Lorenzo.²⁷ È verosimile, comunque, che al centro della composizione si debba ricostruire un Cristo, a cui Damaso si sarebbe rivolto.

Sempre a Roma, è simile il caso di S. Maria Maggiore, la basilica dedicata da Sisto III (432–440). Nell'iscrizione musiva (perduta) sulla controfacciata, l'enunciatore è lo stesso papa, che parla in prima persona alla Vergine Maria a cui ha dedicato la basilica (De Rossi, G. B., *ICUR* II (1888), 71, n. 42, 98, n. 6, 139, n. 28; *ILCV*976; Ihm 1960, n. 3). Coincidono dunque da un lato enunciatore e dedicante, dall'altro enunciatario e destinatario.²⁸ È ragionevole pensare che, anche in questo caso, il dialogo fosse personificato dalle immagini del papa e della Vergine.²⁹

ILCV 976

*Virgo Maria tibi Xystus nova tecta dicavi
Digna salutifero munera ventre tuo
Tu Genitrix ignara viri te denique faeta
Visceribus salvis edita nostra salus
Ecce tui teste uteri tibi praemia portant
Sub pedibusque iacet passio cuique sua
Ferrum, flamma, ferae, fluvius saevumque venenum
Tot tamen has mortes una corona manet.*

«O Vergine Maria, a te io Sisto dedicai il nuovo edificio degno dono per il tuo seno portatore di salvezza. Tu, genitrice che non hai conosciuto uomo; e te infine incinta, pur con intatte viscere, designò la nostra Salvezza. Ecco come testimone del tuo parto, a te portano premi, e sotto i piedi di ciascuno giace (il genere del)la sua passione: ferro, fiamma, fiera, fiume e feroce veleno. Pur tante tali morti, unica la corona resta.»

Non sto a elencare i precedenti pagani di questo tipo, in quanto è di interesse più limitato; quello che è caratteristico è che il dialogo è tutto interno al testo e alla figurazione: nonostante l'impiego del “tu”

dialogico, il lettore non viene interpellato e dunque non è propriamente un discorso, o per lo meno non è un discorso con il lettore, ma piuttosto si deve parlare di un discorso di secondo grado, un discorso nidificato, inserito in una cornice impersonale che lo apparenta al tipo A1. In altre parole un destinante, implicito e impersonale, presenta il dialogo allo spettatore-lettore, che vi assiste da fuori come se si trovasse di fronte a uno spettacolo teatrale.

Trascuro qui le varianti del tipo D che complicherebbero eccessivamente un discorso già troppo lungo e vengo finalmente a qualche considerazione più generale per cercare di dar conto dell'utilità di un simile riassetto dell'evidenza secondo criteri che possono apparire inusuali se non inutilmente esoterici.

Come s'è detto, nessuno di questi tipi è nuovo in assoluto: i più nuovi sono però quelli dove si stabilisce un'interazione tra lo spettatore-lettore e il testo complessivo – in termini tecnici il testo sincretico – costituito dall'immagine e dall'iscrizione globalmente intesi, sia per il maggiore grado di compenetrazione tra le due dimensioni – figurativa e scritta – sia per l'utilizzo monumentale e pubblico di modalità che in precedenza erano confinate essenzialmente in ambito privato.

Naturalmente, ci sono alcuni presupposti impliciti, ma non necessariamente evidenti a prima vista. Innanzitutto la preminenza – almeno a livello percettivo – dell'immagine che si impone sinteticamente allo spettatore, il quale vi ritornerà successivamente e analiticamente una volta che abbia letto e compreso il testo iscritto, venendone orientato più specificamente. In ambito ecclesiale ciò è tanto più significativo in quanto, se si pensa all'esempio fornito per il tipo B, l'arcone trionfale di S. Pietro, ciò corrisponde anche a una necessità teologica e liturgica: è Dio che prende l'iniziativa e interPELLa – tramite la sua immagine – il suo popolo, il quale risponde con la lode (Tabella 2.4).

Secondo presupposto fondamentale è che il testo scritto si presenta per una lettura ad alta voce piuttosto che mentale. La lettura ad alta voce, infatti, era diffusissima in antico ed è richiesta dallo stesso carattere poetico dei versi, in cui gli aspetti legati alla sonorità, alla metrica e alla prosodia trovano piena realizzazione solo se il testo viene effettivamente pronunciato (Johnson 2000, con bibliografia precedente; cfr. anche Saenger 1982; van der Horst 1994). Ciò non significa un'alfabetizzazione massiva del popolo di Dio, ma piuttosto una condizione di oralità, o meglio di auralità,³⁰ in cui i testi venivano recepiti attraverso la lettura di mediatori: ciò avveniva sia per i testi poetici che per quelli storico-letterari. Non posso sviluppare quanto sarebbe necessario questo punto, basti dire che gli studi sull'oralità sono maggiormente affermati per l'epica greca, ma anche in età

tardoantica hanno conosciuto di recente un notevole sviluppo (Cavallo 2002; 2005; Agosti 2005; Agosti 2010a). In ambito ecclesiale inoltre la lettura delle Scritture, l'omiletica e in generale la liturgia erano potenti mezzi che informavano di sé necessariamente anche la produzione epigrafica. Dobbiamo però ricostruire sia mediatori per i testi scritti,³¹ magari capaci solo di sillabare le iscrizioni capitali e quindi aiutati dalla ripetitività di questo esercizio e dalla metrica, sia mediatori per i testi figurati,³² in quanto anche questi ultimi mostrano chiare codifiche e formulari da interpretare variamente proprio alla luce delle iscrizioni sottostanti. Collegata al discorso dei mediatori, d'altronde, non si può dimenticare neanche quella che è stata definita la *interpretive community* (Fish 1987, 102–8, 143–61) cioè la comunità che elabora quella determinata tradizione letteraria e iconografica, nonché la sua interpretazione, in altre parole quella che Eco definirebbe una “enciclopedia” (Eco 1975, §§ 2.10.2; 2.11.3; 1984, §§ 5.2–4).

In un noto testo Paolino di Nola aveva formulato una classica definizione del rapporto tra testo verbale e immagine (Paul. Nol., c. 27, vv. 546–50):

*Quos agat huc sancti Felicis gloria coetus
rusticitas non cassa fide neque docta legendi
haec adsueta diu sacris servire profanis
ventre deo, tandem convertitur advena Christo,
dum sanctorum opera in Christo mirantur aperta.*

secondo il vescovo campano il linguaggio figurato serve a parlare al popolo. In maniera analoga si esprime anche Gregorio di Nissa,³³ tuttavia la solita formula che si usa per etichettare questi casi, quella che definisce le immagini *biblia pauperum*³⁴ – “Scrittura per analfabeti” – risulta una semplificazione eccessiva. Poco più avanti infatti Paolino continua precisando una definizione preziosa: *ut littera monstret / quod manus explicuit*, cioè “che la scritta mostri ciò che la pittura spieghi” (Paul. Nol., c. 27, vv. 580–87):

*Propterea visum nobis opus utile totis
Felicis domibus pictura ludere sancta,
si forte adtonitas haec per spectacula mentes
agrestum caperet fucata coloribus umbra,
quae super exprimitur titulis, ut littera monstret
quod manus explicuit, dumque omnes picta vicissim
ostendunt releguntque sibi, vel tardius escae
sint memores, dum grata oculis ieiuna pascunt.*

Ci si aspetterebbe esattamente il contrario e qui sta ovviamente il

gioco del poeta, ma la apparente inversione verbale non va ridotta a trovata retorica: se una simile affermazione non trovasse corrispondenza nella realtà il gioco non funzionerebbe. Le iscrizioni redatte da Paolino per le sue basiliche hanno esattamente questa funzione deittico-ostensiva e possiamo considerare sotto lo stesso punto di vista numerose altre iscrizioni di chiese paleocristiane, in cui l'invito all'osservatore è costante – sia esso diretto (“*aspice*”, “*cerne*”, “*haec quam cernis*”) o indiretto e implicito in quanto riferito all'oggetto (“*micat*”, “*emicat*”). Qui è l'immagine che veicola l'essenziale e l'iscrizione serve ad attirare l'attenzione su di essa e sul suo senso spirituale.

Torno infine al caso più interessante, che è decisamente il tipo B – per intendersi quello dell'arcone di S. Pietro – in cui lo spettatore-lettore instaura un dialogo paraliturgico con l'immagine musiva. Esso costituisce l'antitesi del tipo A1, quello classico, impersonale, oggettivo in cui il lettore veniva informato con una comunicazione discendente dello stato di cose del mondo, di una realtà che era tale senza possibile scelta alternativa.

La figura di tale lettore-spettatore ricopre un ruolo quasi-autoriale, conseguenza inscindibile dall'enunciazione orale: in una condizione di oralità, infatti, l'autore nel senso letterario del termine tende a dissolversi, a sovrapporsi o a fondersi in maniera pressoché indistinguibile con l'esecutore.³⁵ Che tale meccanismo non sia solo percepito dal lettore moderno, “contaminato” in qualche modo dalle problematiche contemporanee, lo possiamo facilmente dimostrare in base alle stesse fonti: si potrebbe citare l'epigramma del lionese Lucio Claudio Rufino (*CIL* XIII, 2104 = *CLE* 1278):

(...)

*Quodque meam / retinet vocem data litte/ra saxo,
vo[ce] tua vivet, / quisque lege[s titu]los.*

(...)

«E poiché lo scritto pubblicato nella pietra trattiene la mia voce,
per la tua voce vive, chiunque tu sia che leggi le iscrizioni».

ma mi pare più esplicito un testo connesso con S. Agostino, probabilmente primo semiotico della storia.³⁶ Nella vita del santo, Possidio³⁷ ricorda un epigramma funerario, che considera particolarmente adatto a esprimere il valore dell'opera letteraria e spirituale di questo autore:

Possid., *Vita Aug.* 31.8

Vivere post obitum vatem vis nosse, viator?

Quod legis, ecce loquor; vox tua nempe mea est.

«Vuoi sapere, viandante se il poeta vive dopo la morte?
poiché tu leggi, ecco io parlo: la tua voce non è forse la
mia?»³⁸

Vediamo qui chiaramente come fosse conscio il gioco di specchi che si istituisce tra enunciatore e testo scritto.

Torniamo però all'arcone di S. Pietro per un'osservazione conclusiva che mi pare della massima importanza: qui, l'assemblea dei fedeli è interpellata e costituita come interlocutore dal testo sincretico costituito dalla figurazione e dall'iscrizione, inoltre nella sua risposta tale assemblea compie una scelta e assume coscienza della sua identità di popolo di Dio. È infatti nella liturgia, nella sua risposta a Cristo che la comunità cristiana si manifesta come tale, ma allo stesso tempo si manifesta a se stessa, si riconosce e acquista identità, processo impensabile nell'ambito dell'arte di rappresentanza imperiale. Senza queste premesse dunque sarebbe inconcepibile l'apparire di una simile novità nella comunicazione visuale ed epigrafica antica

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1 Il concetto di paratesto è stato proposto da Genette 1989, 4, a partire dalle opere letterarie: in un libro moderno, per esempio, esso comprende innanzitutto nome dell'autore, titolo, prefazioni, illustrazioni. È facile estendere questo concetto a testi figurativi o monumentali. Secondo questo autore, infatti, la sua funzione metalinguistica e il suo compito è “di far meglio accogliere il testo e di sviluppare una lettura più pertinente, agli occhi (...) dell'autore e dei suoi alleati”.

2 I primi passi verso l'utilizzo di queste categorie nello studio della frontalità si devono a M. Schapiro 2002. Già P. Florenskij 1995, 106–25; 313–15 nel 1924–1925 aveva imboccato una via simile, ma con premesse metodologiche differenti e in rapporto a una realtà assai diversa qual è quella delle icone russe. Tra gli studiosi che hanno esplorato la strada aperta da Schapiro cfr. Marin 1980; Uspenskij 1976; Bonne 1985, 72–84; Calabrese 1985, 113–43; Marin 1986; 2001; Thürlemann 1991; Gigante 1999; Corrain 1999; Uspenskij 2001; Calabrese 2006, 31–40.

3 Di dialogo si può parlare solo nello scambio orale, mentre nel caso di un testo scritto o figurato si ha solo un simulacro di dialogo, o per esprimersi più tecnicamente una enunciazione enunciata. Cfr. Greimas e Courtés 2007, 69–71.

4 Frontisi-Ducroux 1995, 81–97. La frontalità esprime anche altri tipi di astrazione del personaggio dal suo contesto come nella separatezza che si ha nella follia, nell'ebbrezza, nell'estasi della musica e della danza etc. In altri casi la frontalità di una figura umana interpella lo spettatore, oppure l'infrazione alla regola del profilo è l'equivalente della figura retorica dell'apostrofe, nel senso etimologico della parola, che implica un improvviso cambio di interlocutore, un ri-volgersi a un altro destinatario: Frontisi-Ducroux 1995, 88–92, 99. Cfr. Frontisi-Ducroux 1991.

5 Greimas e Courtés 2007, s.v. *débrayage*, 69–71, definiscono in maniera tecnicamente più precisa “enunciazione enunciata” o riportata quel che Benveniste chiama “discorso” ed “enunciato enunciato” o oggettivato la “storia”.

6 Per le rispettive iconografie Bisconti 2000, s.v. Fanciulli Ebrei, 177–78 (B. Mazzei); Noè, 231–32 (B. Mazzei); Daniele, 162–64 (M. Minasi); Susanna, 282–84 (M. Minasi).

7 Come si è detto le funzioni 2a e 2b sono estremi opposti di una stessa polarità e non propriamente tipi diversi. Inoltre se adottiamo una terminologia più coerente con la semiotica generativa, anche se certamente più esoterica, le funzioni fatica e straniente potrebbero essere definite rispettivamente come funzioni embraiante e débraiante, il che sottolineerebbe meglio la loro simmetrica complementarità.

8 Sul delegato dell'osservatore nell'enunciato figurativo e sul “commentatore” esiste una letteratura prevalentemente di ambito storico-artistico e semiotico: Marin 1980; 1986; Thürlemann 1991; Gigante 1999; Corrain 1999; Frontisi-Ducroux 1995, 109–11, 116. Cfr. anche (con qualche differenza) Tefnin 2003, 236.

9 Pozzi 1993, 447–53. Cfr. inoltre per una tipologia degli epigrammi in rapporto a monumenti e immagini Bernt 1968; per la relazione fisica tra iscrizione e immagine Corbier 1995; per l'evoluzione stilistica delle iscrizioni onorarie Salomies 1994. Importanti osservazioni che vanno nello stesso senso di quanto viene qui proposto sono in Ma 2007.

10 Ma 2007 a nota 18, soprattutto 212 e 215 parla di un carattere di “*elsewhereness*” della formula onorifica e di un “*refusal of deicticity, of hereness*”. Nel

nostro caso si cita *arcum insignem*, non certo *hunc arcum*. Semmai una relazione esiste tra le iscrizioni, che si trovano nel fornice principale, e i grandi rilievi reimpiegati, che si trovano subito al di sotto di esse: quella che sovrasta la scena in cui Costantino si trova alla testa di una carica di cavalieri lo definisce infatti *liberator Urbis*, mentre quella associata a una scena di *adventus* lo presenta come *fundator quietis*. In questo caso le due iscrizioni definiscono il modo in cui va interpretata l'immagine sottostante per guidare il lettore-spettatore a comprenderla secondo le intenzioni della committenza; esse restano tuttavia strettamente impersonali.

11 *ICUR* II 4094. Per la lunga discussione che ha interessato il testo rinvio a Liverani 2007, 241–42; 2008, 159–61, dove la interpreto come riferita alla basilica nel complesso e leggo nel padre e nel figlio citati Costanzo Cloro e Costantino. Gnilkà 2012 propone ora interessanti argomenti per una diversa interpretazione e una datazione più tarda: mi riprometto di tornare sull'argomento.

12 Per la classica suddivisione delle sei principali funzioni linguistiche cfr. Jakobson 1966, 188–89. La funzione referenziale (denotativa o cognitiva) è quella rivolta al contesto. Ho proposto un tentativo di applicare queste categorie all'apparato figurativo dell'arco in Liverani 2004.

13 Cfr. nota precedente. La funzione emotiva è quella che «si concentra sul mittente, mira a un'espressione diretta dell'atteggiamento del soggetto riguardo a quello di cui parla (...) a suscitare l'impressione di una emozione determinata». La funzione poetica, invece, è costituita dall'accento posto sul messaggio per se stesso, che ne rafforza l'espressività e l'efficacia. La funzione conativa infine è data dall'orientamento verso il destinatario ed è tipica della poesia alla seconda persona nella sua versione esortativa, ma è espressa ancora più chiaramente dalle forme verbali all'imperativo, assenti nel caso preso qui in esame, ma presenti in diversi esempi citati più sotto per illustrare lo stesso tipo. Nell'esempio qui considerato è invece rafforzato – come mi fa osservare Gianfranco Agosti – dalla struttura tricolore del primo verso e dall'anafora del relativo.

14 Varro, *Il* 6.54; *CIL* VI 312 (= 30735a, poco prima del 193 a.C.), 313 (= 30735b, età di Commodo); 316 (= 30735e, forse *Marius Perpetuus cos.* 237), 319 (= 30735h, forse *cos.* 272). Cfr. anche dediche a Silvano *CIL* XIV 1 (età di Commodo); *CIL* IX 3375 (156 d.C.); *CIL* XII 103; dedica a Diana *CIL* III, 1395 = *CLE* 864 (ca. 160 d.C.).

15 *CIL* VIII 26655; Dunbabin 1978, 97–98, tav. 34, fig. 88; 1982, 74–75, 87–88, n. 8, tav. 8, 17; Ennaifer 1983, 817, 823, fig. 3; *CIL* VIII 26655: *Eros / omnia per te / Aman[d]us Frunitus*. I due ultimi nomi sono quelli dei due cavalli centrali della quadriga.

16 Non possono essere trascurate alcune coincidenze, talvolta letterali, di concetti e *topoi*: si pensi all'immagine del mondo intero ottenuto da Costanzo II (*toto orbe recepto, dominus mundi*) equivalente a quella – più ellittica – del *mundus* riunito da Costantino, ovvero si notino le motivazioni trionfali della dedica dell'obelisco paragonabili a quelle della basilica vaticana, l'insistenza sull'emulazione virtuosa tra Costanzo e il padre Costantino, che fa eco a quella che abbiamo visto nel mosaico absidale tra Costantino e il padre Costanzo I, la definizione di Costantino come *auctor* dell'obelisco, che riprende quella dello stesso mosaico absidale dove Costantino è dichiarato *auctor* della basilica, e – infine – l'immagine dell'obelisco innalzato come trofeo (*superas consurgere in auras*), che non può che richiamare l'immagine del *mundus* che *surrexit in astra triumphans* nel distico dell'arcone trionfale.

17 *Anth. Gr.* I.7; Mango 1986a; Cameron 1973: le basi note delle dediche a Porfirio intercalano testi in versi, in prosa e rilievi per lo più rigorosamente frontali. *Anth. Plan.* 32; Bauer 2003, 510.

18 *ILS* 1863 = *AE* 1986, 243: *Theodore feli[x]/[a]diuvante Deo/omnipotente et/poemnio caelitus tibi / [tra]ditum(!) omnia / [b]aeate(!) fecisti et / gloriose dedicas/ti;*

da ultimo Lehmann 2009.

19 Anche nella Basilica Nord del gruppo episcopale di Salona nel mosaico pavimentale tra il *synthronon* e l'abside (dunque visibile solo per i presbiteri) era il riquadro con l'iscrizione di dedica (dalla metrica approssimativa) *Nova post vetera / coepit Synferius(!) / (H)esychius eius nepos / c[u]m clero et populo [f]e[c]it / haec munera / domus PX(Christ)e grata / tene: ILCV 1843 = AE 1903, 177; Caillet 1993, 384; Id., in Gauthier, Marin e Prévot 2010, n. 63. È ipotizzabile che anche in questo caso l'abside fosse decorato da un affresco con Cristo tra i due vescovi costruttori; la datazione del pavimento è da porre nei primi decenni del V sec., se è corretto riconoscerli tra i modelli la iscrizione di dedica della basilica di S. Paolo f.l.m. a Roma ICUR II 4780, databile entro il 403: cfr. Liverani 2013.*

20 Matthiae 1967, 149–68, 411–12, (grafico 13b non numerato); Bovini 1971a; 1971b, 267–86; Della Valle 2002, 1664–65, 1667, fig. 3; Bonelli e Romano 2006.

21 Per l'iscrizione, successivamente distrutta CIL VI 17985a = 34112; F. Buecheler, CLE I² (1930) 856; Lattimore 1942, 273; Sanders 1970, 326, n. 32; per la statua EA 5092, attualmente all'Indianapolis Museum of Arts: Pucci 1968–69; Wrede 1981, 101–9, c, con bibliografia. Cfr. anche Häusle 1980, 98–99, n. 32; Zanker 2002, 162, fig. 126, 181, n. 15; Dunbabin 2003, 103–4; Koortbojian 2005, 301; Davies 2007, 46–49, fig. 2.3; Liverani e Spinola 2010, 133–34.

22 Vedi anche l'iscrizione di Scandilia Pamphila da Durazzo, AE 1966, 404: *Hospes noli admirare / quod sic me in lecto vid(es) / recubante(m) dormient(em) / mortua sum...*; oppure l'iscrizione di Socrate CIL XIV, 480 = CLE 1255 *Hic ego qui sine voce loquor de marmore caeso (...)*. Cfr. Häusle 1980, 44, n. 12; Filippi 1998, 95, inv. SP 1867, fig. 199. In quest'ultimo caso l'amico Ivan Di Stefano mi suggerisce che *caeso* possa significare “inciso” – e allora sarebbe l'iscrizione come tale che parla – ma io preferirei attribuire le parole a un perduto ritratto, anche sulla base di alcuni confronti che fanno pensare alla scultura più che all'incisione: Stat., *Silv.* 2.2.90 *caesum de monte*; CIL III 1395 = CLE 864 *marmoreo caesam de monte* (scil. *statuam*, ca. 160 d.C.); CIL VI, 1163 (obelisco di Costanzo II a Roma) r. 6 *caesa Thebis de rupe*; Sid. Apoll., *Carm.* 5.34–35: *...saxis quae caesa rubenti / Aethiopum de monte cadunt*.

23 Si tratta della prima menzione certa della leggenda della lebbra di questo imperatore, trasmessaci dai più tardi *Actus Silvestri*, Mombricitus 1910, II, 508–31.

24 Robert 1948, 47–49; SEG XLVII, 1555; Roueché 1989, 63–67, n. 37, tav. X; ALA 2004, 37; Livrea 1997; Merkelbach e Stauber 1998, 246, 02/09/24 Afrodisia; Feissel 1998, 707–8, n. 646; Hedrick 2000, 128–29; Agosti 2010a; LSA 193 (J. Lenaghan). Al termine del penultimo verso Robert 1948, 53 n. 3, con cautela, propone *ὠπασε ποίῳ*, seguito da Livrea 1997, 43.

25 Fu aggiunta all'inno a S. Agnese del *Peristephanon* di Prudenzio con la dizione “Versus Constantinae, Constantini filiae, scripti in absida basilicae” (nei codd. Cantabrigensis, Oxoniensis, R' (Vaticanus), i due Sangallenses, Vindobonensis); il cod. G (Sangermanensis ora Parisinus) invece meno credibilmente – per ragioni di spazio – aggiunge “Constantina hos versiculos in dedicatione basilicae dictavit et super arcum qui basilicam continet iussit scribi”. L'abside fu rifatto da papa Onorio (625–38, ma forse già da Simmaco) dunque manca alle sillogi medievali che datano a partire dal VII sec.

26 Papa Adriano scrivendo a Carlo Magno attribuisce a Damaso tale decorazione, che ancora *historiis sacris et imaginibus picta habemus* (*Epist.* I, 19: PL 98, 128; MGH, *Epist.* V, 50).

27 Davis-Weyer 1961, 34–35. Naturalmente in tal caso si deve considerare esatta la correzione di De Rossi in *saepius* del *saepius* riportato dall'unico teste, il cod. *Virdunensis*.

28 In questo caso si dovrebbe forse parlare più che di enunciatore ed enunciatario di interlocutore e interlocutario, Greimas e Courtés 2007, s.v. *interlocutore*/

29 Così già de Blaauw 1994, I, 356. Saxer 2001, 43–45, presuppone pure l'immagine della Vergine e osserva che non può considerarsi centrale in mezzo alla processione dei santi martiri, elencati allusivamente nelle ultime quattro righe, poiché tale centralità in quest'epoca è riservata esclusivamente a Cristo. Anche sulla base dell'insistenza dell'iscrizione sulla maternità verginale di Maria, Saxer ipotizza dunque la presenza di Gesù bambino sui cui convergerebbero la Vergine e i martiri. Con tale proposta si può convenire, ma pure va perfezionata: sembra difficile immaginare il bambino Gesù diversamente che in braccio alla Madonna. La preoccupazione – inespressa – di Saxer è la simmetria attorno all'immagine centrale, che non può raggiungersi con un numero dispari di personaggi di contorno – le cinque figure martiriali – tuttavia questa ipotesi trascura un personaggio importantissimo nell'iscrizione: colui che parla, ossia lo stesso papa Sisto III, che è anche il dedicante. La ritrosia ad ammetterlo nella scena è probabilmente da ricercarsi nel fatto che, secondo la vulgata degli studi, l'iconografia del dedicante – magari con il modellino della chiesa in mano – trova confronti solo in epoca successiva. Una volta però rivalutata la presenza di Costantino che dedica il modello di S. Pietro sull'arcone trionfale della basilica vaticana (cfr. supra note 19–20), cade tale difficoltà e non facciamo fatica a immaginare la Vergine con il bambino in grembo, attornata dai cinque martiri e dal dedicante in perfetta simmetria. Wilpert 1931; De Bruyne 1938, 308–11, pongono i santi tra i finestrini della navata mediana (come Duchesne); Klauser 1972, 129–35 pone invece più giustamente l'intero mosaico sulla controfacciata; infine Spain 1979, 532 colloca il mosaico nell'abside.

30 Per i concetti fondamentali dell'oralità cfr. Ong 1986; Zumthor 1984. Per il concetto di auralità Ong 1970; cfr. anche Goody 1989, 120–32. Ulteriori proposte terminologiche sono quelle dell'"alfabetismo partecipativo" di Smith, 2008, 60–61 o dell'"alfabetizzazione povera" di Corbier, 2006, 75. Per epoche posteriori cfr. anche Talbot 1999, 77–78, 86; fondamentale Papalexandrou 2001; 2007; Agosti 2010b.

31 Cfr. le importanti osservazioni di Pietri 1988, 149–50 relative ai possibili mediatori con il pubblico illetterato. V. per es. l'iscrizione funeraria AE 1989, 247: *quicumque legerit aut lege[ntem] / ausculta(ve)rit*, nonché l'asserzione di Hermeros in Petr., *Satyr.* 58.7: *lapidarias litteras scio*. Cfr. anche Day 1999.

32 Cfr. *l'aedituus* della basilica di S. Cassiano a Imola in Prud., *Perist.* 9.17 e segg., la guida di Gregorio di Tour e del vescovo di Lione Nizier a Saint Ferreol a Vienne (Greg. Tour, *De Virt. S. Juliani* 2), l'illustrazione omiletica di un affresco raffigurante la lapidazione di Stefano in Aug., *Serm.* 316.5, il semiilletterato che riesce a decifrare le iscrizioni delle immagini sacre nella Gallia di Greg. Tour., *Vita patrum* 12.2. Più in generale Brennan 1996, 71–73; Agosti 2004–2005; 2008.

33 Greg. Nyss., *De Sancto Teodoro*, PG 46, 737D (= *Gregorii Nissenii Opera* X.1 [1990] ed. Cavarnos, p. 63, 12–13): οἶδε γὰρ καὶ γραφῇ σιωπῶσα ἐν τοίχῳ λαλεῖν καὶ τὰ μῆγιστα ὠφελεῖν. («Infatti vedi anche la pittura silente parlare sulla parete e giovare grandemente»).

34 Su questa espressione cfr. Kessler 1985; 1989; Brown 1999. L'attestazione più antica di questa idea è in Nilo del Sinai, *Ep.* IV.61 (PG 79, 577 D; Mango 1986b, 33); la classica teorizzazione è di Gregorio Magno in una lettera del 599, al vescovo Sereno di Marsiglia, Reg. IX.208, e in una seconda dell'anno successivo Reg. XI.10.

35 Sulla natura complessa e composita degli enunciatori e degli enunciatari cfr. Goffman 1987, 175–216: in particolare per quanto riguarda l'enunciatore questo autore distingue l'"animatore" (potremmo dire il "portavoce"), dall'"autore" e, infine, dal "mandante" nel senso legale del termine. Tali categorie sono state elaborate per l'interazione diretta – faccia a faccia – ma possono benissimo essere adattate a una comunicazione scritta e monumentale. Nel caso dell'iscrizione musiva

corredo di un mosaico paleocristiano, il mandante può essere il committente (imperatore, vescovo o donatore), l'autore il presbitero letterato che ha composto i versi e l'animatore il popolo che legge i versi. In una comunicazione ufficiale nella società contemporanea possiamo individuare i tre attanti nello speaker (animatore), che legge il testo scritto dall'ufficio stampa (autore) di una figura istituzionale (mandante): la differenza del caso paleocristiano sta nel fatto che l'animatore, proclamando il testo, ne fa proprio il contenuto, condividendone l'intenzione autoriale e mandatoriale – se così ci è concesso esprimerci.

36 Per l'attribuzione della paternità a questo autore (*De Magistro* 2.1) della prima fondamentale intuizione semiotica – la definizione di segno in senso non unicamente linguistico – cfr. Eco1984, 32–34.

37 Possid., *Vita Aug.* 31.8. L'epigramma, benché anonimo, dovette avere una certa notorietà perché lo ritroviamo in precedenza con qualche variante in un'iscrizione funeraria

38 Cfr. anche Häusle 1980, 44, n. 12 e Feldherr 2000, 218, ma entrambi con traduzione discutibile; assai preferibile invece quella di Carena (in Bastiaensen, 1975, 239). *CIL* XIV, 356 = *CLE* 1450, testo frammentario e con almeno una variante rispetto al testo di Possidio, ma che possiamo probabilmente integrare come segue: [---]s *Vivir Aug(ustalis)* / [---]e *Felicitati con/[iugi? --- e]t Tulliae Arsinoe* / [---libertis libe]rtabusq(ue) posterisq(ue) / [eorum hoc monu]mentum exterum / [her]ede(m) non sequitur / [---] herede / [Vivere post obitum vatem vis] scire viator? / [Quod legis, ecce loquor; vox] tua nempe mea est. Successivamente compare anche in un'omelia di Paolo Diacono: *PL* 95, c. 1531.

USING IMAGES FOR SELF- REPRESENTATION ON ROMAN SARCOPHAGI

Stine Birk

Tombs were sacred places in the Roman world, and their primary function was to provide spaces for rituals and commemoration. The family played an important part in these acts, as reflected in the Roman funerary custom of grouping individual burials into family units. The outer appearance of burial complexes is often dominated by either an inscription or figural decoration that alludes to deceased ancestors or living family members, such as portraits placed in niches, inscriptions mentioning the family name, and phrases such as *suis et sibus*. However, the focus on the family in the actual act of commemoration must not overshadow the importance of the individual person, which is evident from the marking and decoration of individual burials. One way to approach the individual in the Roman funerary tradition is to study the images that were made of him or her on their funerary monument. In this study, I will look at sarcophagi with portrait figures.

The practice of inserting portrait heads on idealised figures on relief-adorned marble sarcophagi is a characteristic feature of sarcophagi made for patrons living in or near the city of Rome in the imperial period. These faces with their individualised features and period hairstyles are found on a wide variety of mythological and otherwise idealised figures (for mythological figures see, for example, Newby 2011 and for portrait figures in general, see Birk 2013). They made possible the negotiation of a *post-mortem* identity of the person buried in the sarcophagus and were used by the patrons as a means of self-representation (for self-representation on Roman sarcophagi, see especially Zanker and Ewald 2004; for patronage of sarcophagi, see Birk 2012). The presence of portraits on idealised figures in

sarcophagus imagery is most frequent in the 3rd century – with a prelude in the 2nd century and a continuation of the tradition in the 4th-century production, a production of which the iconography was primarily of Christian character.

Through the individualised figures aspects of Roman lives and deaths were equated with the fate of mythological figures, and the virtues of the deceased were ranked alongside virtues and qualities implied in the ideal characters, such as learnedness, *virtus*, and *pietas*. However, to use mythological and other ideal characters to commemorate a deceased person begs a series of questions – the most crucial being, how is the relationship between the deceased and the idealised figures to be understood? The aim of this paper is to show how these images were used in the context of self-representation and commemoration both to idealise the memory of the deceased and to create a ritual space for mourning and consolation. My thesis is that the significance of this kind of self-representation reaches beyond mere imitation of upper class ideals and constructions of impersonal memories. Instead, people used these images in acts of mourning and, as several sarcophagi hint, the creation of individual identities. This double use of the portrait figures is possible because the individualised sarcophagus figures are readable on more than one level: Firstly, they present analogies to roles, values, and ideals generally accepted in society, and secondly, they relate the individual virtues and qualities of the deceased.

Men, women, and self-representation

The purpose of being depicted as an ideal figure on sarcophagi is to construct a lasting and fixed memory of the deceased. Through visits to and celebrations at the tomb, this ideal image of the person would gradually become the prevailing perception of the deceased person and influence the way that particular individual was commemorated. Two scenarios can lead to the use of this kind of self-representation on sarcophagi: one is when a person during his or her lifetime chose a sarcophagus and applied his or her portrait to one of the figures in a scene. The other kind of self-representation is when the family or a member of the family chose a sarcophagus with a specific motif for an already deceased family member. Though there is a difference in the way one understands the relationship between the portrayed person and the ideal iconography in the two scenarios, the patron's choice of motif is important in both cases. Whether the patron is the still living and future inhabitant of the coffin or the family of an already deceased person, the choice of portrait figure informs us of ideals and

virtues in contemporary society. It is also indicative of values that were deemed appropriate to characterise the portrayed person. However, in the first case, we take as a point of departure that the individual constructs an identity for him- or herself by selecting motifs that mediated some aspects of his ideal qualities while letting other aspects of his personality go unnoticed. In the second case, self-representation is meant primarily to honour the deceased but also to reflect back on the family, thereby constructing an ideal image of the deceased as well as of the family. In both cases the identity is primarily idealised and fictional, but at times it is also combined with details that deviate from the norm, which thereby emphasise the aspect of individuality and personal experience.

It is a general characteristic of portrait sarcophagi that an equal number of men and women were commemorated through idealised characters. Though there are some body-types that were preferred by individuals of a specific age or gender, the general picture is that men and women could be commemorated through the same body-type and with the same virtues (cf. Sande 2010). We therefore often find that the same figure was used by both sexes to be provided with a portrait, such as, for example, the learned figure, which in the 3rd century became the dominant portrait figure on sarcophagi, both for women and for men. In the 2nd century, the learned man was already a well-established figure in Roman iconography. This body-type continues into the 3rd- and early 4th-century sarcophagus production where the representation of a learned woman portrayed with a scroll in her hand and additional scrolls placed at her feet takes a numerically equal place in sarcophagus iconography to that of the learned man. Thereafter women could hold a scroll, as could men, even on the same sarcophagus, but rarely in the same scene. When represented as a married couple, only the man had a scroll, demonstrating his superior position in comparison to the woman, and the woman either held a musical instrument, or she acted as a Muse for her husband.

In contrast to the image of the learned man, the learned woman is a new figure in the 3rd century. From the great number of representations of learned women, we observe that after her introduction she immediately became the most popular form of female selfrepresentation (Huskinson 1999; 2002, for a collection of learned women with portraits, see Birk 2013). She is represented seated or standing with a scroll in one hand and dressed in a long tunic and a *palla*. Often she is surrounded by Muses or philosophers. When the woman was given the scroll in scenes with only one portrait figure, it was not because she imitated the iconography of men at a time where the significance of the scroll had been diminished. It was because she could be represented through the same ideals as the man when the

message of the sarcophagus was not about marital ideals. An example of how a woman could be commemorated as learned can be seen on a fluted coffin in Tarragona (Fig. 3.1), where a veiled woman in tunic and *palla* is shown on the first panel. In her hand she holds a scroll, which, however, is not the only thing on this coffin that makes her appear as a learned woman. On the other panel, on the right end of the coffin, a bare-chested philosopher is represented with naked feet and dressed only in a *pallium*. On many fluted sarcophagi, the figures on these two panels are both represented with portrait features in order to accommodate the commemoration of, typically, a married couple. On this piece, however, the philosopher is shown with generic facial features. His presence, as well as the central motif showing a seated philosopher, adds an extra dimension of learnedness to the woman's *post-mortem* identity (for philosophers on sarcophagi, see Ewald 1999). This iconographic composition hints at a gender distinction that is worth noting in the discussion of representations of learned men and women, namely the different use of the learned iconography when the woman is represented alone as opposed to when she is represented together with a man. What we therefore can observe is that in the 3rd century, male and female virtues could be presented as one and the same, and that there was an overall acceptance of women as learned. Differences between men and women should therefore not be sought in their sex but in the figures' mutual relationship. As we will see, mythological scenes illustrate the same scenario. Here both men and women represented virtues such as *concordia*, *virtus*, and beauty, but when they were represented in the same scenes they were subject to cultural or marital rules, which, for example, caused them never to be represented together naked or as equally virtuous.



Fig. 3.1. Strigillated sarcophagus from Tarragona (MNAT P-60). The woman on the first relief is represented with a portrait (Birk 2013, cat. no. 131). Photo: Troels Myrup Kristensen. With permission from, Tarragona, Museu Nacional Arquelògic de Tarragona, collection MNAT.

This differentiated use is exemplified by a fragment of a frontal relief that was once on the art market in Paris but which today is lost (Reinsberg, *ASR* I 3 (2006) cat. no. 162, pl. 115, 2). The panel is strigillated and the central motif shows a couple in a pose similar to the *dextrarum iunctio* motif in front of drapery (*parapetasma*), a feature that is often seen behind portrait figures on sarcophagi and helps to emphasise the idealised status of the deceased. The man is learned and holds a scroll whereas the woman is represented with a bird at her left side. The fact that the woman is represented on the same panel as the man means that she cannot be represented through an iconography of learnedness, whereas the man can. The woman is only shown as a learned figure when other figural panels separate the panel in question.

There are, however, exceptions to this iconographic formula, and especially when moving into the early 4th century the learned woman begins, as we will see, to dominate the tradition of portrait figures. An example can be found in the frontal relief of a coffin in the Palazzo Nuovo in the Capitoline Museum (inv. S9, La Rocca and Presicce 2010, 40–45). Here both the man and the woman are represented as learned. This is possible probably because the emphasis on the matrimonial virtues, as seen on the previously mentioned sarcophagus, is downplayed by placing them on two separate reliefs and removing all kinds of objects of beautification from the female representation, and the man and the woman commemorated on this coffin are represented as two equally learned individuals.

Learned figures constitute one kind of popular self-representation in middle-class Roman society, but other motif spheres were in play when a patron went to a workshop to choose a memorial (efforts to describe the social class of sarcophagus patrons have been made by Fittschen 1975, 15–18; Bielefeld, *ASR* V 2, 2 (1997) 86–88; Ewald 1999, 116–17; Huskinson 2002, 112). In the next section, I will look at body-types drawn from the mythological world.

Mythological portrait figures

The importance of myths in the Roman iconographic language cannot be overestimated, and as in the world of the living where mythological figures were found on all kinds of objects, representations on funerary monuments were used to equate the lives of men, women and children with myths. Sarcophagi with a mythological motif constitute the largest iconographic group of the entire production of sarcophagi from Rome or the near vicinity (Zanker 2005, especially Abb. 2). Examination of those with portrait

figures reveals that the mythological portrait figure is typically found in narrative scenes. A type of scene that conveys a kind of transformation other than that in the figural panels on fluted sarcophagi, such as the one we just looked at (for mythological portrait figures, see Newby 2011; Birk 2013, 94–113). The many men and women who were represented with portraits on sarcophagi bear testimony to the need for role models in the construction of *post-mortem* identities, and in the context of mythology, divinities, heroes, beautiful mortals, and heroic warriors were the third most popular body-types to be provided with a portrait. Transformations of individuals constitute a rhetorical tool whose full potential we meet in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, especially in book VI. Whereas the transformations of humans in Ovid were something that happened through divine intervention and that were not always for the better, on sarcophagi humans undertake the transformation of individuals into ideal body-types themselves. Nonetheless, the message of a person's transformation into a divine or ideal character on sarcophagi alludes to the same cosmic order of divine presence that we encounter in the *Metamorphoses*. The portrait figure is supposed to demonstrate that the gods accepted the deceased as the personification of an ideal character. Furthermore, the stories of sarcophagus reliefs concern the life of the individual buried in the coffin, a story that in the end, as happened for Augustus in Ovid's poem, can earn the deceased immortality.

Among the representations of humans transformed into ideal figures on mythological sarcophagi some of the more frequently seen types are the sleeping figures, namely Ariadne, Endymion, and Selene (Koortbojian 1996; Newby 2011). Generally, mythological characters whose destiny can be interpreted in terms of love, death, and loss were popular. Such characters are, for example, Proserpina, whose abduction by Pluto is a symbol of the separation that death causes when someone dies, or Achilles with the dying Penthesilea in his arms, where the focus is on loss and love as Achilles falls in love with the Amazon queen the moment he kills her (Ewald 2003, 571; Zanker and Ewald 2004, 53–54, 286–87; Newby 2011, 213–14). Other myths were not represented as frequently, and may therefore be seen as the desire to convey something special about the person or the situation that caused the death of the person commemorated. In the Capitoline Museum we find a coffin whose frontal relief is decorated with scenes from the myth of Laodamia and Protesilaos (inv. 2465, Blome 1978; Zanker and Ewald 2004, 201–2; Newby 2011, 197–99, 375–77). The coffin is probably the final resting place of a woman, since it is a woman's death scene that is illustrated on the right end. The relief illustrates sequences from the myth that together constitute a tale of

loss and despair: Protesilaos stepping off the ship as the first man on the shore of Troy, thereby incurring his own death, Mercury leading him first to and then back from Pluto, the reunion of Laodamia and Protesilaos, and finally the death of Laodamia caused by the final separation from her husband when he is sent back to Pluto. The choice of the Laodamia iconography is probably not a metaphor of the way the woman died but a statement of that particular woman's virtues as a beloved, faithful Roman wife.¹

When myths are represented on sarcophagi, they often share a number of compositional similarities: for example, the three myths with sleeping figures all show a mortal character lying on the ground in a similar posture with one arm raised above the head, and in all three scenes the sleeping mortal is found or visited by an approaching divinity. This easily recognisable iconographic scheme helps the viewer to read the intended message of the relief and thereby reach an interpretative agreement with the, at least often for us, anonymous patron. The image of the sleeping Ariadne was used, for example, to commemorate girls, as in the case of Maconiana Severiana, whose coffin and lid today are in the collection of the Getty Villa (inv. 83.AA.275). Her parents commemorated Maconiana as *afilia dulcissima*, as stated in the inscription on the lid. In this case her portrait was never carved on the head of the sleeping Ariadne, meaning that the head was left with a blank portrait. We will return to this phenomenon. From a self-representative point of view, this image of the sleeping Ariadne provides an ideal role model for a woman, since Ariadne is young and beautiful. Looking into the private motivation for choosing such a motif we find the allegory of death, alluded to by the sleeping figure, and the implicit promise of a re-awakening to a happy afterlife, as symbolised through Ariadne's acceptance into the Dionysian world, played a major role.

The roughly carved head, or blank portrait, is a feature that is found on almost one third of all portrait sarcophagi, suggesting that even though the roughly carved head from the beginning of the sarcophagus production was probably intended for a portrait, these blank faces gradually gained a meaning as a representation of the soulless body that was hidden in the coffin (Birk 2013, 55–58). The roughly carved head, found on, for example, five out of 12 Ariadne sarcophagi (Birk 2013, cat. nos. 555–66), has, among other things, made scholars speculate about the organisation of the sarcophagus production and the possibility of prefabricated coffins ready to be purchased when death occurred (see also Russell 2011). The possible prefabrication of the coffins and the standardised appearance of the scenes support the suggestion that their decoration illustrates values and ideals that were generally accepted in society, but it also

questions the impact of the individual person on the final product. However, as we will see, prefabrication does not rule out manipulation of stock motifs in order to accommodate individual demands, and the blank portrait can be interpreted as a symbolic representation of the person buried in the coffin.

The body-types used for portrait representations could take many forms but in the individual case of a particular myth, portrait representations were basically restricted to particular types of characters. Ariadne is, for example, the only person in this sequence of the myth ever represented with a portrait. However, Dionysos does appear with a portrait on a few sarcophagi, just not in combination with the sleeping Ariadne. He is found, for example, on a piece in the collection of the Museo Nazionale in Rome (inv. 124682; Birk 2013, cat. no. 564) with a roughly carved head. Here he is dressed and a veiled Ariadne is seated beside him on a rock. Another example, where Dionysos has been carved with the portrait of a deceased man is found on a fluted sarcophagus from Le catacombe di Pretestato in Rome (Fig. 3.2) (Wrede 1981, cat. no. 181; Birk 2013, cat. no. 568). Except for these two examples, Dionysos is never individualised through a portrait. It seems that the character of Dionysos in the procession, being drunk and lustful, was not an appropriate role for a Roman husband. Such behaviour was only appropriate when the man was represented alone, as on the Pretestato sarcophagus. The preferential treatment of one figure, namely that it can be given portrait features in specific contexts, changes and particularises the myths. By adding a portrait, the focus changes from a broad narrative of the myth to a concentration on the one aspect of the story where the portrait figure is the main protagonist. Instead of being a general narrative about life and death, the myth also becomes a tale of a particular individual's death and personal virtues. Therefore, the presence of a portrait helps us towards an understanding of the intended meaning of the sarcophagus relief, and it is in this selective process that some characters were found inappropriate.



Fig. 3.2. Strigillated sarcophagus with the deceased represented as Dionysos (Birk 2013, cat. no. 568). Rome, Catacombe di Pretestato. Photo: D-DAI-Rom 29.434 (Sansaini).

Portraits of women and men on sarcophagi

When Roman women used mythological figures for self-representation, they chose characters such as Ariadne, Venus, Penthesilea, Selene, Rhea Silvia, and Proserpina, some of which we have already encountered. Common to all of these characters is that they were all renowned for their beauty and they were all, in one way or another, victims of love (on the display of physical beauty on

sarcophagi, see Ewald 2005, 61–62). When a portrait is added to one of these figures the deceased takes on the virtues implied in the figure's attributes, actions and appearance as they are mediated in this particular sequence of the myth. The typical virtues are feminine beauty and love, which can be exemplified through the appearance of the goddess Selene as she is represented on sarcophagi descending from her moon-chariot with a tunic belted just below the breasts and one naked shoulder (Sichtermann, *ASR* XII 6 (1992) 35–39; Newby 2011, 205–9). She is a beautiful woman and the sinuous curves of her body are emphasised by her clothes. This particular scene shows Selene in one of the most passionate moments, that is when she sets foot on the ground to meet her lover, Endymion. Her love for Endymion is so strong that she has bound him in eternal sleep, and on the relief a figure of Eros leads her to the sleeping youth. Like Selene, Ariadne is represented as a beautiful, young woman. She is half naked but innocent in her unawareness of the approaching god and his desire. Proserpina is a last example of a gracious, innocent girl, whose only fault is the beauty she possesses. It is that love which triggers the affair about to unfold.

Apart from women being objects of male desire, we can add their quality of embodying strength through their own feminine and sometimes male gendered qualities, as exemplified through Penthesilea, who, as she is represented on sarcophagi, possesses male *virtus* and feminine beauty at the same time. Finally a characteristic female role on sarcophagi is that of the supportive wife, sometimes with veil and averted eyes, a figure type that is popular throughout the entire production of portrait sarcophagi. This female type is typically found on strigillated sarcophagi with a marital theme and in combination with a learned man or magistrate (Lücken 1956; Wrede 2001; Reinsberg 2006).

Looking at men, we note that the typical male virtues are those of courage and heroism, often symbolised through the figure's heroically naked body or a warrior's helmet, and again love and *concordia*. Despite the differences in the appearance of the female and male figures their roles in the scenes are not that differentiated. The deceased man, like the deceased woman, could appear as a divinity that, aroused by love, reveals himself or herself to a sleeping mortal. Examples are Selene and her male equivalent in scenes with a sleeping figure, the god Mars. Mars, of course, stands for very different virtues than Selene, but in these scenes their actions and feelings towards the deceased (the sleeping mortal) are the same. These scenes show that the roles that could be assumed by a person were determined by the message that the patron wanted to send and not on the sex of the deceased. Basically, the compositions of all these Sleeping Beauty

scenes are alike. The mortal figure is situated in the lower right corner of the relief, and the god or goddess approaches from the left, and each of the characters could be individualised through a portrait, with the exception of Dionysos which we have already examined (Koortbojian 1995, especially 100–39).

Even though many of the male portrait figures found an equivalent female figure, there were also figures that were more appropriate for the self-representation of men than of women, such as the very popular lion hunter (Andreae, *ASR* I 2 (1980)). In these scenes the man is represented as the courageous lion hunter on horseback slaying a lion. At times a woman is represented in the scenes as well. In such cases she is shown as the personification of *Virtus* and assisting the man in his hunt. In these scenes, she is depicted behind the central hunter as his supporter (Hansen 2007).

The frequent juxtaposition of women and men on sarcophagus reliefs places the interpretation of their virtues in the context of marriage. On scenes with couples, gender roles are well defined but not always in terms of the passive woman and the virtuous man, as may be deduced from scenes such as those with Mars and the Roman princess Rhea Silvia. Mars comes to Rhea Silvia in her sleep and she acts as the passive and innocent part (for the representation of a Roman couple as Achilles and Penthesilea, see Ewald 2004, 254). In scenes, where Selene appears before Endymion in his sleep, he (and not she) is the object of love encouraged by his beauty. Here the woman takes the active role and the man the passive (on the interpretation of scenes with Selene and the sleeping Endymion in relation to reflections on life, death and beyond, see Koortbojian 1995, 63–99). The mythological woman, concurrent with her virtues as beautiful and worthy of love, thus possesses both action and male-related virtues. The visual expression of the male *virtus* in itself is a female personification of *Virtus*. She is a feminine figure in a male-gendered environment, but she is not to be regarded as inferior to the man. She is his actual strength and courage, and through her support of him she symbolises both *concordia* between the two and her personal strength. Two representations of lion huntresses show that women could enter a male-gendered environment by representing themselves by body-types designed for men, accompanied by their own female personification of *virtus* (Sande 2010; Birk 2011; 2013, cat. no. 289, fig. 73). Such sarcophagi are a clear illustration of my suggestion that iconography on sarcophagi expresses the gender of the deceased and the portrait the sex, and that, mainly through the portrait (or an inscription), it is possible to determine the sex of the person commemorated by the sarcophagus and not by the imagery itself.

Thus, there is a wide spectrum of gender roles represented through the figures used for self-representation on sarcophagi. Even though male and female figures could embody the same qualities, this was never done in the same scene. Represented together in one scene, men and women take different and complementary roles and represent different values, as discussed in connection with the learned man and woman. It is only when represented alone that the values of these body types were not strictly bound by marital ideals.

Portraits of Christian men and women on sarcophagi

Often the study of pagan Roman and Christian sarcophagi has been separated, but the way self-representation was used to negotiate peoples' identity on early 4th-century sarcophagi is a continuation of the Roman tradition of using portrait figures. The Christians continued to transform themselves, or the memory of their person, by representing themselves as ideal figures in an ideal setting. However, with the dissemination of the Christian narrative tradition this picture changed radically: the number of portrait figures declined, and the repertoire of body-types diminished. Though the number of portraits had already decreased in the latter part of the 3rd century, a survey of Christian sarcophagi (based on Deichmann *et al. Rep. I* (1967)), indicates further decline in the use of portraits on Christian sarcophagi, both numerically and in terms of iconographic range (Koch 2000, 108–9). The representation of the deceased as a god or hero disappears almost without exception. Portrait figures continue to interact in narrative scenes, but portraits appear most often as busts framed by a *clipeus*, a shell, or in front of a *parapetasma*. On Christian sarcophagi, men with portrait heads were only seldom represented as protagonists, though they continue to appear together with women on *dextrarum iunctio* sarcophagi. In contrast to men, women with portrait heads were more often represented as interacting with other figures, and the *Orans* and the learned woman are by far the most frequent examples (Fig. 3.3). It is striking that the number of interacting female figures should be greater than that of males. We should, however, hesitate to account for this as a conscious gender distinction, but rather see it as a natural development of the popular 3rd-century practice of individualising the Nine Muses and the learned woman by means of portraits (Huskinson 2002, 19). Since no female biblical characters (e.g. Mary or Eve) were vehicles for an individual portrait, the *Orans* should not be interpreted as a named biblical or mythological figure, as is most often the case with interacting figures

in pagan sarcophagi. Instead the *Orans* with portrait features is a personification of a virtue possessed by an ideal woman (on the *Orans*, see Deichmann 1983, 179; Klauser 1958).

The lesser importance placed on portraits signals a rather radical break with pagan tradition and was the result of a changed attitude to the relationship between the individual, religion and *post mortem* self-representation at the beginning of the 4th century. In the previous period the individual was the central element, and aspects of social values or ideals, symbolised by the figurative scenes, were closely linked with the deceased by association with his or her portrait. With Christianity, the emphasis on the individual became less pronounced, as is implied by the decreasing interaction between portrait figures. Instead, the most common mode of self-representation became the juxtaposition of a biblical narrative scene with a *clipeus*-portrait or another kind of framing. Just as the interacting portrait figure in the 3rd century emphasised the individual, the deceased's separation from the narrative scene in the Christian period gave priority to religion. By using the *clipeus* for selfrepresentation, the dead asserted that they belonged to the cult and aspired to the virtues embodied in it. At the same time, the separation from the represented biblical scene marked by the *clipeus* signals that the Christian dead distanced themselves from any claim to equal status with characters from the biblical narrative tradition. This focus on religious belief, rather than on the individual, may be symptomatic of the Christian cult, because Christians claimed that their faith transcended class boundaries, distinctions in social rank, and family bonds, though they had all previously been fundamental to Roman society.



Fig. 3.3. Strigillated sarcophagus with *Orans*. From the motif it can be difficult to decide if the patron was Christian or not, and the sarcophagus is a typical example of the continuation of the production of portrait sarcophagi in the early 4th century (Birk 2013, cat. no. 14). Rome, S. Prassede. Photo: D-DAI-ROM 59.426 (Böhringer).

Another aspect of the diminishing emphasis on individuality is the fact that it becomes more difficult to distinguish portraits from generic heads during the 4th century. In that period the portraits gradually lose their individual features (for example, the *Orans* on the Via Lungara sarcophagus, see Deichmann *et al.*, *Rep.* I, cat. no. 771; Sapelli 1998, 21). The head appears with what could be termed an image of a portrait instead of a portrait with realistic features. It seems as if it were no longer important to make the portraits realistic: symbolic representation of the deceased is sufficient for him or her to be associated with the ideals and virtues embodied in the scene.

The popularity of the *Orans* illustrates a shift toward the spiritual, though she is not, by definition, Christian (Koch 2000, 21; Zanker 1995, 269; Reinsberg in *ASR* I 3 (2006) 152–54). She is a symbolic expression of a new form of virtue (*i.e.* piety in relation to Christian belief) combined with the traditional cultural understanding of how to express ideas through iconographic language (Tulloch 2004, 286–87). The figure of the *Orans* combines elements from representations of the Muses, the learned woman and *Pietas* and it was probably the popularity of representations of the Muses and of the learned woman in the 3rd century which paved the way for the introduction of the *Orans* on sarcophagi (Zanker 1995, 269; Huskinson 1999, 203; 2002, 19. On *Pietas* and the *Orans*, see Klauser 1959; 1964; 1965–66, 127–28). Following this argumentation the *Orans* is an ideal representation of a certain kind of woman who possesses *pietas*, intellectual status, and authority.

Continuity in figural types shows that, despite a change in mentality, and thus in the reading of these representations, the “old” Roman sculptural tradition was maintained. The same workshops and craftsmen continued to produce sarcophagi (Deichmann 1983, 33; Klein 2002, 145), and they used the familiar iconographic language to express new concepts, including those that were Christian. We also saw that with the coming of Christianity the choice of virtues and beliefs considered worthy of commemoration moved from emphasising the individual as a model of virtues valued by society to a diminishing significance of the individual *per se* entailed by a corresponding insistence on her or his religious faith.

After about 330, it was no longer common practice to use images to transform persons into ideal identities and sarcophagus portrait figures disappeared as a consequence of the fact that religion, and not the individual and the family, was the central factor in the construction of identity.

Conclusion

To conclude, self-representation is both about social ideals and about constructing individual memorials. Two functions of sarcophagi have been in focus: one, putting emphasis on how the individual can be approached through sarcophagus imagery. This included the interpretation of motifs as expressions of emotions, such as grief, and the search for consolation through representations of the deceased individual. The other function, by no means unconnected with the first, is the use of images in the construction of identity. Here idealised figures play a central role and show how the Romans manipulated myths and stock motifs to construct an ideal memory of themselves.

In the way that identity and gender roles were negotiated through the creative use of sarcophagus images, we see a high degree of flexibility, even in the period when Christianity played a far greater role in Roman funerary custom than any one religion had done before: we see self-representation constructed through figures of passive and feminine men conveyed through the beauty of Endymion and the effeminate Dionysos and Apollo (for example, the Hearst Castle Apollo and Muse sarcophagus, Birk 2013, cat. no. 553), and we see active women, such as the descending Selene, and women with masculine virtues, such as the warrior queen Penthesilea or the individualised Virtus.

Despite of the homogeneous character of the sarcophagus production a careful study of the choice of motifs on sarcophagi shows that patrons used stock motifs to construct *post mortem* identities. Though the same motif was used to commemorate different individuals, we should not see it as a mere convention without meaning. Instead the use of stock motifs should be interpreted as a way of securing that the ideals the person wanted to be remembered through, were also the ideals read into the figure by the viewers. In this line of argumentation, the portrait is in itself testimony to the importance of the individual in Roman funerary rituals, and the coffins with individualised learned characters or divinities are a source for us to investigate these rituals of mourning. Such coffins convey the need of the family to be able to contemplate the life of the deceased individual, not in terms of actual life scripts but in an abstract and idealised form that brings consolation for coming generations. Furthermore, these ideal images of individuals are an expression of the fear of ordinary people of being forgotten after their death. Therefore, we can conclude that a sarcophagus was a highly personal memorial that emphasised the importance put on the individual in Roman society, and in communicating this, the portrait image of the deceased played a crucial role.

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¹ Another coffin that relates a personal history of a married couple is the Admetus and Alkestis sarcophagus from Ostia, see Grassinger, ASR XII (1999) cat. no. 76; Wood 1978; Newby 2011, 194–97, 200.

MAXENTIUS, CONSTANTINE, AND HADRIAN: IMAGES AND THE EXPROPRIATION OF IMPERIAL IDENTITY

Eric R. Varner

Although the historical rivalry between Maxentius and Constantine has been characterized in starkly black and white terms: pagan vs. Christian, usurper vs. legitimate ruler, tyrant vs. liberator, or vanquished vs. victor, the monumental picture is far more nuanced. After Maxentius' defeat and death at the Battle of the Milvian Bridge on 28 October 312, Constantine freely expropriated his rival's architectural and artistic legacy, often re-inscribing his own name on buildings Maxentius had recently completed or restored and superimposing his own Constantinian likeness on pre-existing sculptural representations of Maxentius. Constantine, however, was not simply attempting to obliterate the identity of Maxentius as forged in monuments and portraits through rescription and substitution, but rather actively seeking to cannibalize Maxentius' carefully crafted public persona which had been founded on the resonant memories of imperial predecessors and the *aeternitas* of Rome itself.

Maxentius is conventionally condemned in the historical literature as a "bad" emperor of Rome, like Caligula, Nero, Domitian, Commodus, or Elagabalus before him, but his six year principate is, in fact, remarkable for the sheer scope of its artistic and architectural accomplishments (Coarelli 1986; Steinby 1986, 142; Cullhed 1994, 49–60; Marlowe 2010). Like other condemned emperors, Maxentius was subjected to an array of memory sanctions, including the erasure of his name in inscriptions and the deliberate mutilation of his portraits (Varner 2004, 215–19, 286–88, nos. 9.1–5). In Constantinian panegyric and Christian authors such as Eusebius, Maxentius is treated

as a depraved pagan tyrant (*Eccl. Hist.* 8.14.2–5; Marlowe 2010, 201). Nevertheless, through his architectural program, Maxentius aggressively re-asserted the primacy of Rome which in turn secured him a loyal following and extensive popularity among the urban *plebs* and army.

Architecture and Aeternitas

Marcus Aurelius Valerius Maxentius was declared emperor on 28 October 306 at a time when rival capitals were upstaging Rome in political and administrative importance. Although a number of impressive building projects and renovations had recently been completed in Rome, Maxentius inherited a capital which still lay in disarray as a result the devastating fire of 283 as well as the architectural dislocations occasioned by the construction of the Aurelian walls in ca. 271–5 (Coates-Stephens 2007). Maxentius' father, Maximian had only just dedicated the massive bath complex on the eastern edge of the Quirinal in 305 in the name of his eastern colleague Diocletian; the western edge of the Forum Romanum, as well as the Forum of Julius Caesar had also undergone extensive rebuilding and re-organization. In the Forum, Maximian (and Diocletian) rebuilt the Curia Julia which had been destroyed in the fire. The Basilica Julia was rebuilt, the five column monument was conceived in order to provide an impressive columnar backdrop for the ancient rostra, and a new rostra was added in front of the Temple of Divus Iulius.¹ The intensive building activity in the Forum carried out under the Tetrarchs was intended to consolidate imperial power and legitimacy through architecture (Coarelli 1999; Mayer 2002, 175–83; Machado 2005). In addition, the Templum Pacis was subjected to a radical reconfiguration early in the 4th century as revealed by recent excavations (Rizzo 2001, 241–43).

Maxentius' architectural interventions in Rome, however, far surpassed in breadth those of the Tetrarchy (Steinby 1986, 142). Maxentius actually completed the restorations of the Forum of Caesar, the Basilica Julia, the Curia Julia, and the Temple of Saturn, but as a result of the tetrarchic repristinization of the western edge of the Forum, Maxentius focused the bulk of his own architectural efforts at the opposite eastern end, where Hadrian's temple of Venus and Roma had been severely damaged in a fire of 307 (Aur. Vict., *Caes* 40; Chronograph of 354, 148; Bauer 1996, 59; Dumser 2005, 195–282; Giavarini 2005, 12; Ziemssen 2006, 400). Maxentius reconstructed the Hadrianic temple and added the immense new Basilica (Basilica Nova) and adjacent structure, the so-called Temple of Romulus, thus

effectively transforming this entire area into a veritable “Forum of Maxentius” (Coarelli 1986, 22; Culhed 1994, 49–55; Santangeli Valenzani 2000, 41–43). The rebuilding of the temple of Venus and Roma, the largest temple precinct in the city was an enormous undertaking in and of itself (Plate 5). The works appear to have been overseen by the architect Marcus Aurelius Perykles and may have involved as many as 10,000 laborers, as suggested by an inscription from Mylasa in Turkey (Burkert 1992). The project re-employed some surviving elements of the Hadrianic structure (Boatwright 1987, 124–25). The reconstruction of the temple, dedicated to the personification of the city, and to Venus, the divine ancestress of the Roman people as well as the Julio-Claudian family, the founding dynasty of the Empire, sent a powerful message of Rome’s resurgence and *aeternitas*, reaffirming the city’s pre-eminent identity as *caput mundi* (Gagé 1936; Coarelli 1986, 21). Coins further underscore Maxentius’ ties to the goddess Roma, who vests him with imperial power as *Roma Aeterna Autrix Augusti Nostri* (RIC 6, 343, 373, no. 173; Culhed 1994, 47, fig. 4; Mayer 2002, 184). In addition, the temple’s refurbishment inexorably linked the living emperor Maxentius to the memory of its original patron and architect, Hadrian. Numerous issues in bronze and silver were minted which depict Roma alone or with Maxentius inside a temple and allude to the temple’s resurrection, including issues from Rome (bronze, RIC 6, 371, nos. 162–64, 276–78, 194–95, 198–99, 202, 204–5, 208–13, 382–85, 258–63, 278–80; silver, 375, 187), Ticinum (bronze, RIC 6, 293–6, nos. 84–86, 91–95, 100–5, 108–10) and Aquileia (bronze, RIC 6, 325–6, nos. 113–26). At the time of its construction, Hadrian’s temple with its highly unusual hybrid Greek and Roman architectural format constituted a radical refocusing of the cult of Roma, as well as Venus, at the capital and coincided with his transformation of the ancient Parilia into the festival of the Romaia, as the *Dies Natalis* of Rome on 21 April, effectively a celebration of the city, its goddess, her new temple, and empire (Boatwright 1986, 121–22, 128–30). Maxentius’ comprehensive reconstruction of the temple was no less radical and broadcast similarly emphatic statements concerning the paramount imperial significance of the city.

Certain issues, including a *folles* from Aquileia show the wolf and twins in the temple’s pediment (RIC 6, 325, nos. 113–14; Leppin-Zeimssen 2007, 37, fig. 14). According to Prudentius, the precinct was also embellished with statues of Hercules, Castor and Pollux, Tros, Ilaus, Janus, Sabinus, Saturn, and Picus (*Contra Symmachum* 1.215–37). These statues likely formed part of Maxentius’ iconographic program for the renovation of the Temple that was intended to underscore the ancient Trojan and Italic origins of the city, as well as its divine protection by the Dioscuri.² The appearance of Hercules

likewise evoked the city's mytho-historical beginnings, as well as the close association of Maxentius' family with the deity as Herculei, which had formed an important aspect of his father's imperial ideology and self-presentation (Vermeule 1977, 293). In addition, Maxentius had featured Hercules on the coinage, where the god is identified as the emperor's ally and companion, *Hercules Comes Augusti Nostri* (RIC 6, 373–74, nos. 171, 181). Aurei minted in Rome in 308 also depict Maxentius with the lionskin of Hercules (RIC 6, 172–73, nos. 167, 170). Two surviving bases also indicate that Maxentius and his father were honoured with portrait statues near the approach to the rebuilt temple along the via Sacra (Valigieri 1900, 65; Vaglieri, 1903, 25, n. 1; de Ruggiero 1913, 488; Bauer 1996, 49, ns. 272, 274).³ Other late sources indicate that a statue of Minerva (Serv. ad Aen. 2.227) and silver portrait statues of Marcus Aurelius and Faustina Minor (HA. *Trig. Tyr.* 32) were also part of the sculptural decoration (Cassatella 1999, 121–22). A series of at least nine Medusa head masks are associated with the frieze of the Temple and may have been salvaged from the Hadrianic building and re-used during the Maxentian reconstruction (Prusac 2008).

In conjunction with the rebuilding of the Temple of Venus and Roma, Maxentius erected the enormous new basilica at the northeastern edge of the Forum Romanum and at approximately 6.000 m², it constituted the largest vaulted interior space ever erected at the capital (Plate 6) (Bauer 1996, 57–59; Giavarini 2005, 12; Lancaster 2005, 138; Leppin and Ziemssen 2007, 87–95). It also forged historical links with the earlier basilicae in the Forum, the Basilica Aemilia, yet another of Maxentius' restoration projects (Steinby 1986, 145; Culhed 1994, 57) and the Basilica Julia, as well as the Basilica Ulpia in the Forum Traianum. The vaulted and apsed interior of the Basilica Nova, as well as its massive scale, echoed the contemporary renovations to the back to back cellae of the Temple of Venus and Roma which themselves were reconceived as vast apsidal, barrel vaulted halls (Ziemssen 2006, 401–2). Furthermore, the Basilica was carefully sited in the location of the Domus of P. Valerius Publicola, which seems to lie beneath the western apse in order to signal Maxentius' own connections to the ancient gens Valeria (Coarelli 1986, 20; 1995, 210; Van Dam 2011, 242; F. Fraioli in Carandini (ed.) 2012, 298). Like the other basilicae, the Maxentian basilica was multifunctional and, just like many of the most important buildings in Rome, ancient sources are relatively silent concerning it, precisely because it was so well known and central for the life of the city (Coarelli 1986, 24).

Immediately adjacent to the Basilica along the via Sacra, Maxentius constructed another innovative building with a domed interior (Plate

7). Although the precise identification of the structure, popularly known as the Temple of Romulus, has proved problematic, its topographical associations are quite rich and it may have functioned as the temple of the Penates, the Temple of Jupiter Stator or as a vestibule for the Praefectus Urbi (Coarelli 1986, 6–7, 12; Papi 1999, 211; Dumser 2005, 162–27; F. Fraioli in Carandini (ed.) 2012, 298). Coarelli has also suggested that the building might have been affiliated with the imperial cult as promoted on Maxentian coins which show a domed building and are dedicated to the Divi Maximian, Constantius Chlorus, Galerius and Maxentius' deified son Romulus (Coarelli 1986, 14–15), although Dumser has recently attempted to dissociate the coins from this building (2006). Additionally, the building's location appears to coincide with the public tomb of the Valerii adjacent to their *domus*, further stressing Maxentius' position as the current head of the Valerian *gens*.

The facade employs re-used architectural elements including the Severan bronze doors and marble frame, a cornice with first century door jam and Augustan cornice, as well as Flavian molding courses and column capitals (Kinney 1997, 126; Claridge 1998, 109). Indeed, it is one of the earliest surviving Roman buildings to insist on its amalgamative and spoliative identity.⁴ As with Maxentius' other projects, Constantine expropriated this building as well and rededicated it in his own name. Both Pirro Ligorio and Onofrio Panvinio record elements of the now lost inscription (*CIL* 6.1147; Coarelli 1986, 11; Bauer, 1996, 51–52; Marlowe 2010, 214). Ligorio gives the fuller version of the inscription as *Imp. Caes. Constantinus Maximus Triumph. Pius Felix Augustus* and if he is correct, its triumphalist overtones are clear. The striking concave facade of the building serves to focus attention on the spoliated elements of the door and its surrounding decoration and is a modification of its original design, although unclear whether part of the initial Maxentian project or a more substantive Constantinian reclamation (Dumser 2005, 129–30; Marlowe 2010, 213–15).

The Basilica Nova and the 'Temple of Romulus', as well as the renovations of the adjacent Templum Pacis may also be associated with the Urban Praefecture whose administration was strengthened and centralized under Maxentius and his Praefectus Urbi of 307, Attius Insteius Tertullus, who was probably intimately involved in the initiation of the works on the Basilica and Temple of Venus and Roma (*CIL* 6.1696; Coarelli 1986, 29–30, 34; F. Fraioli in Carandini (ed.) 2012, 298). Indeed, this entire area seems to be particularly linked with the amplification of the *praefectura urbi* in the 4th century and, as a result particularly resonant in terms of the *aeternitas* of the city and its physical maintenance.

Further down the via Sacra, Maxentius dedicated statues of Mars, Romulus, and Remus near the Curia, the ficus ruminalis and the Lapis Niger, reputedly the tomb of Romulus or of his foster father Faustulus (Festus 177.32) which further underscored the *aeternitas* of the city (*Marte Invicto patri/et aeternae urbis suae/conditoribus/dominus nowtr/Imp Maxent[iu]sPF/InvictusAugustus*, CIL 6.33856; Cagianò de Azevdo 1960–61, 200; Coarelli 1986, 21; Bauer 1996, 18, 73, 104; Curran 2000, 60–61; La Rocca and Zanker 2007, 154, n. 50). Not coincidentally, the statues were dedicated on 21 April 308, the *dies Natalis* of both the city and the Temple of Venus and Roma which Maxentius was in the process of resurrecting.⁵ An inscription may also refer to Maxentius as Conservator Urbis Suae for his restoration of the via Sacra and its monuments (CIL 6. 1223; Coarelli 1986, 21).

Often singled out as one of Constantine's most important architectural interventions at the capital, the substantial refurbishment and expansion of the seating capacity of the Circus Maximus may actually have been initiated under Maxentius, since most of the evidence of brick stamps are actually Maxentian (Steinby 1986, 142–43). Although it is impossible to determine if Constantine employed pre-existing Maxentian bricks for the Circus renovation, Maxentius did expand the facade of the Domus Augustana which faced on to the Circus to the southeast with the addition of a large bath complex (Hermann jr. 1976; Capodiferro 1999). It is also certainly within the realm of possibility that Maxentius' putative restoration project envisioned the importation of the obelisk ultimately realized by Constantine's son, Constantius II (Ammianus Marcellinus 17.4.12–14). If the refurbishment of the Circus was indeed begun by Maxentius, Constantine's expropriation of the project also accessed the legacy of Trajan who famously expanded the public seating of the Circus and apparently reduced the imperial box of Domitian (Pliny *Pan.* 51.4–5; Humphrey 1986, 80–83, 103–6).

Portraits and historicism

Maxentius' portraits in sculpture and coins are no less noteworthy for their revivalism that forged direct links with the past through their classicism and *romanitas*, readily apparent in surviving sculpted likenesses in Dresden, Stockholm, Hannover, and Rome.⁶ Maxentius himself was tangible proof that the tetrarchic system had failed and he rejected its innovative artistic forms in sculpted and numismatic portraiture in favor of a more consciously classicizing approach. At its most radical, tetrarchic portraiture projected abstracted and stylized notions of *similitudo*, but Maxentius preferred a more historicized idiom

which situated him within an extended imperial continuum (Bergman 2007, 64; Kampen 2009, 104–8). While his coiffure and beard are still closely cropped in military fashion, recalling those of the tetrarchs, a highly distinctive fringe of carefully delineated comma shaped locks has been added over the forehead in order to evoke Julio-Claudian or Trajanic coiffures from earlier in the Imperial period, or their revival under Gallienus at the middle of the 3rd century. The classicism of Maxentius' sculpted portraits as well as the short fringe of bangs over the forehead find strong formal parallels especially in Gallienus' first portrait type.⁷ The system of extended historical references embedded in Maxentius' representations indelibly stamps him with the sanctity and authority of the imperial past. While the historicism of Maxentius' images is certainly not new in imperial portraiture, its re-emergence after a period of intensive artistic experimentation under the tetrarchy is symptomatic of a late Antique aesthetic propensity for self conscious spoliation and quotation from earlier sources.

The historical strains in Maxentian portraiture found their most monumental expression in the colossal seated statue of the emperor as Jupiter designed as the focal point for the interior of the Basilica Nova. Now in the Cortile of the Palazzo dei Conservatori, the head was discovered at the Basilica in 1486 during the pontificate of Innocent VIII Cybo (Plate 8).⁸ The original likeness of Maxentius was reconfigured circa 312–315 into Constantine's second portrait type which had been introduced to mark his quinquennalia in 311.⁹ The deep indentation visible in the forehead attests to the extensive recutting of the Maxentian coiffure in this area. In addition, the hair over both the left and right temples has been substantially modified with two separately worked pieces of marble (Parisi Persicce 2006, 149, figs. 61–62). The right section of inserted coiffure has remained in place, while the left section is now lost, leaving only its large empty socket. Raised surfaces before both ears indicate the areas where Maxentius' sideburns and the upper sections of his short beard have been smoothed down. The full, plastically rendered curls of Constantine's sideburns have been pieced separately, as with the sections of coiffure on the top of the head, and their square mortises are placed in front of the ears. The marble prosthesis of the right sideburn is preserved in the storerooms of the Musei Capitolini and is still visible *in situ* in early photos of the head.¹⁰ The overall reduction of sculptural volume has also caused the nose to be extremely prominent in profile, a feature also seen in other portraits of Constantine, as well as those of his father, Constantius Chlorus.¹¹ Nevertheless, the colossus retains the configuration of the mouth and eyes, as well as the shape of the chin from the Maxentian likeness, as is evident in his unaltered likenesses in Stockholm, Dresden,

Hannover, and Rome. Like the Maxentian image, the coiffure and classicism of the recarved Constantine deliberately invoke the iconographic legacies of Augustus and Trajan and indeed, the beardlessness of the Constantinian portrait only serves to intensify these references.

The retrospective ramifications of the colossus, however, are more complicated as it was not carved *ex novo* for Maxentius, but rather reconfigured from a pre-existing likeness of Hadrian. The original portrait head was carved from a single block of Parian marble (Pensabene *et al.* 2002, 254). Maxentius did not control the island of Paros and its quarries and it is extremely unlikely that such a large block of this highly desirable marble would have been available in Rome at the beginning of the 4th century. As C. Evers was the first to notice, the highly unusual creased earlobes of the colossus permit a precise identification of the original likeness as Hadrian, who is the only emperor to consistently feature this physical trait (1991, 795) which can be readily seen in a replica of Hadrian's third (*Rollockenfrisur*) type in the Palazzo Altemps (Plate 9 a–b).¹² Remnants of the Hadrianic coiffure further suggest that the original was also a replica of Hadrian's third portrait type (Evers 1991, 795–96). Because its initial alteration from Hadrian to Maxentius necessitated a major reduction in the sculptural volumes of hair and beard, the sculptors responsible for the second reconfiguration were constrained to add the separate marble sections of coiffure and sideburns. It is also possible that the same master sculptors who transformed the image of Hadrian into Maxentius were also responsible for its final recarving as Constantine.

The reconfiguration as Maxentius was not intended as any kind of negative reflection on the memory of Hadrian but rather a way of renovating and reincarnating the Hadrianic original and accessing the positive connotations of his imperial legacy. Maxentius, in effect becomes the new Hadrian, at once *renatus*, *renovatus*, and *redivivus*. Earlier in the imperial period, the transformation of representations of revered emperors was actively discouraged in the first and second centuries as witnessed by the maiestas laws involving images of Augustus (Suet. *Tib.* 58; Tac. *Ann.* 1.74), or Marcus Aurelius and Lucius' Verus refusal of requests to recycle the silver portraits of their predecessors at Ephesos (Oliver 1941, 93–96; Fejfer 2008, 391–92). Nevertheless positive transformative *exempla* did exist in the bronze equestrian portrait of Alexander reconfigured as Julius Caesar in the latter's Forum, presumably carried out under Augustus, or the two painted portraits of Alexander by Apelles from the Forum of Augustus, which were transformed into likenesses of Augustus under Claudius (Pliny *HN* 35.10.27, 36.93–4; Zanker 1984, 22–23; Isager 1991, 120–

21; Parisi Persicce 1994, 172; Kinney 1997, 137). None of these reconfigurations are treated negatively in surviving sources, and Statius singles out the Alexander/Julius Caesar for comparison to the *Equus Domitiani* (*Silvae* 1.84–90; Vout 2008, 162–63).¹³ At Athens, statues of the Attalids were reused as portraits of Agrippa, Octavian and Tiberius not to denigrate or erase the memory of the Attalids, but rather to underscore a kind of dynastic continuity between the kings of Pergamon and Rome (Moreno 1994, 566–67; Calcani 2001, 96; Keesling 2010, 306–8; Krumeich 2010, 331–32). In fact the rededication to Agrippa on the Akropolis, replaced an earlier reconfiguration of the monument in honor of Marcus Antonius and Cleopatra (*IG* 2/3² 4 1 22; Keesling 2010, 307–8). Later in the 4th century at Rome, two bronze statues likely depicting Augustus and Agrippa which decorated the Pons Agrippae appear to have been modified with new portrait heads of Valens and Valentinian (Coarelli 1999b, 107). In the realm of imperial cameos, reconfigured portraits of Domitia Longina (from a Julio-Claudian likeness) and Julia Domna (from Faustina Minor) both seem to have been positively motivated.¹⁴

Maxentius' rebuilding of the Temple of Venus and Roma indicate a profound interest in Hadrian's architectural legacy and Maxentius also undertook repairs to Hadrian's villa at Tivoli as well (Steinby 1986, 144). In addition, the Mausoleum of Maxentius' son Romulus which forms part of his villa-circus complex on the Via Appia, has well documented architectural links to the Pantheon (Frazer 1966) and the villa itself also seems to have had Hadrianic or early Antonine phases.¹⁵ The marble repairs carried out on the Colossus suggest that the Hadrianic portrait was already damaged by the early 4th century, which may have occasioned its refurbishment and reconfiguration as Maxentius (Pensabene *et al.* 2002, 254). Ultimately, Constantine has not only displaced the Maxentian image, but accessed its underlying Hadrianic associations. Indeed, reconfigured portraits themselves are a kind of spoliated construction which often leave legible clues of their hybrid identities and iconographic interconnections (Evers 1991, 800–2; Stewart 2003, 281–82; Parisi Presicce 2006b, 156; Fejfer 2008, 377–78; Varner 2008).

At least two other portraits associated with Maxentius, at Ostia and (formerly) in a private Roman collection indicate that Maxentius' exploitation of early imperial portraits was not strictly limited to Hadrian.¹⁶ Both portraits preserve traces of their original Julio-Claudian coiffures at the back of the head, and the arrangement of the locks at the nape of the neck suggest that both originally depicted Augustus. The direct association with Augustus formed part of Maxentius's traditionalist strategies to position himself as heir of the first emperor in direct opposition to the more ceremonial and

hierarchical configuration of emperorship under the tetrarchy, as also seen in Maxentius' pointed use of *princeps* in his numismatic titulature (RIC 6 49–52; Hekster 1999, 724; Van Dam, 2011, 241–42).

Although these images are more proximate as likenesses than their counterparts in Stockholm, Dresden, Hannover, and the Torlonia collection, their combination of short, Julio-Claudian hairstyles with lightly incised beard would probably have been sufficient enough, together with context and accompanying inscriptions to secure their identification as Maxentius. The Ostia head is colossal in scale, which confirms an imperial identity for both the original image and its recarved successor. The portrait is worked for insertion into a cuirassed statue body and it was found in the Porta Marina Baths which were completed under Hadrian and furnished with portraits of Trajan, Plotina, Marciana, Hadrian, Sabina, Antinous, and Antoninus Pius (Valeri 2001).¹⁷ Maxentius may also have been involved in restorations to the Forum Baths and the Theater at Ostia (Steinby 1986, 142). The display context of the recut image at the Porta Marina Baths makes its associative allusions particularly rich, invoking the Julio-Claudian origins of the empire, Trajan, Hadrian, Antoninus Pius and the current emperor, Maxentius. Antonio Giuliano has proposed an interesting rereading of the Panegyric of 321 in which *deiectio* and *litura* do not refer to Maxentius' impious alteration and profanation of divine images through the addition of his own portraits, itself a well established trope for tyrannical emperors like Caligula who was alleged to have contemplated placing his own portrait on the cult statue of Olympian Zeus (Suet. *Calig.* 22.2; Dio 59.28.3; Josephus, *AJ* 19.8; Huet 2008, 195–202), but rather the kind of substitution or dispossession (*deiectio*) and “correction” or “adjustment” (*litura*) as reflected in the surviving likenesses recarved from Augustus or Hadrian (*Pan* 4 (10).12: *venerandarum imaginum acerba deiectione et divini vultus litura deformis*, Giuliano 1997, 30). Maxentius himself seems to have evinced a willingness to redeploy representations of his imperial predecessors for their allusive power and Constantine would also co-opt these associative strategies (Parisi Presicce 2012, 110).

Maxentius, however, did not single handedly introduce these retrospective trends into the imperial repertoire; rather, the active reuse of the sculpted images of revered predecessors actually seems to initiate under Gallienus, about fifty years earlier. Numerous portraits of Gallienus have been consciously refashioned from Julio-Claudian or Hadrianic representations (Prusac 2006, 113–15; 2011, 52–4), including likenesses recarved from Augustus in Copenhagen and Berlin or from Hadrian in Rome.¹⁸ The 3rd-century Arco di Portogallo re-employs Hadrianic reliefs which may also have been recarved to represent Gallienus (La Rocca in La Rocca, ed. 1986, 29–30; Kleiner

1992, 134, 235, 445; Kinney 1997, 133–34; Prusac 2006, 115; 2011, 52). At least in terms of portraiture, the potent classicism and retrospection of the so-called “Gallienic Renaissance” is in fact a careful admixture of sculptural style, iconographic references to earlier coiffure or beard styles and the physical recycling of selected Julio-Claudian and Hadrianic sculpture (Prusac 2006, 126). In the Early Imperial period, memory sanctions of Rome’s bad emperors provided the major impetus for the sculptural reconfiguration of portraits, but the 3rd century witnesses a profound shift in practice with significant numbers of recarved private likenesses. Indeed, by the Tetrarchic period, an entrenched culture of artistic reclamation sought to legitimize the present through reinterpretation of the past (Prusac 2006, 2011; Ambrogio 2010). The Arcus Novus, celebrating the decennalia of Maximian and Diocletian in 293 also notably re-employed earlier, 1st and 2nd century reliefs (Laubscher 1976; Torelli 1993b; Kinney 1997, 129–33, 145–46; Prusac 2011, 17, 62). Two surviving portrait heads which have been recarved, including one possibly from Claudius, indicate that, like the Arco di Portogallo reliefs, any imperial portraits present in the reliefs were reconceived as the current tetrarchs (Cagianò de Azevedo 1951, 40, no. 11, pls. 5, 46–48, no. 21, pl. 19). While the motives for reuse are varied and can encompass economic as well as ideological incentives, the net effect is aesthetic and the Maxentian and Constantinian reconfigurations were carried out in a visual environment already heavily populated with reused portrait sculpture.

At 2.97 m high, the colossal Hadrian-Maxentius-Constantine is the largest imperial portrait to have survived from Rome. The seated statue itself was approximately 10 m in height and its overall proportions appear to be slightly larger than the colossus from the sacellum of the Forum of Augustus or the colossal Augustus in the Cortile della Pigna of the Vatican.¹⁹ Its size, as well as its two phases of recarving make it the most extensive surviving sculptural reconfiguration ever attempted in Roman marble portraits.

In its original iteration as Hadrian, the statue would have required an environment just as large as the Maxentian basilica for its display. The Hadrianic Temple of Venus and Roma could have provided a suitably vast venue, and Maxentius may have recovered the portrait during his rebuilding campaign (Evers 1991, 798; Safran 2006, 55), although the marble remnants of the statue exhibit no fire damage which might be expected if it came from that temple.²⁰ R. Taylor has recently proposed that the large temple on the Quirinal, which surpassed the scale of the Temple of Venus and Roma or the Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus Capitolinus, is actually Hadrianic in its origins, with substantial Severan additions, including the monumental

staircase which allowed access from the Campus Martius (Taylor 2004). Although this complex has also been variously identified as the Temple of Hercules and Bacchus, the Temple of Sol, or the Temple of Salus, the association with Serapis seems plausible.²¹ Recently, M. C. Capanna has proposed a new reading for the site as a complex composed of two temples in which the large temple on the summit of the hill (complesso A) is identified as that of Hercules and Bacchus mentioned by Cassius Dio (78.22), while a second smaller temple located on a projecting terrace (complesso B) is assigned to Serapis, (Capanna 2009; Capanna in Carandini 2012, 463–64).

If Taylor is correct in his earlier Hadrianic dating of the majority of the complex, this temple, which seems to have been in a state of disrepair by the early 4th century could have provided a similarly vast location for display of the Hadrianic colossus.²² Indeed, Taylor has also proposed a direct architectural connection between the Quirinal Temple and the Basilica Nova by suggesting that the monolithic Proconessian columns from the Basilica's interior were spoliated from the pronaos of the Temple of Serapis and he estimates the height of the original order to have been 54 Roman feet, making it among the largest orders employed in imperial Rome. The one surviving column from the Maxentian Basilica was moved by Pope Paul V Borghese to the piazza in front of S. Maria Maggiore. The vast interior of the Basilica may even have been designed from the outset to accommodate the columns from the temple of Serapis, as well as the colossal statue. For Taylor the size of the column and its lost counterparts may indicate that they were originally intended for the putative first failed porch of the Pantheon and, judging from reconstructions by Serlio, Palladio, and others the pronaos of the Quirinal Temple may have replicated the Pantheon project in scale and design (2004, 244–51, see also Richardson 1992, 342). At the time of his death, Maxentius' architectural interventions on the Quirinal seem to have been focused on the ex-novo construction of the adjacent bath complex, and the salvaging of the temple's architectural elements may have been carried out conjointly. Maxentius' concentration on the labor intensive renovation of the Temple of Venus and Roma likely precluded a concomitant refurbishment of a complex that rivaled it in scale. Nevertheless, the enormous size of the Quirinal Temple would have ensured that any of its colossal sculptural decoration that may have been salvaged and used elsewhere would have retained an association with its original Hadrianic identity and location in the collective memory of the city.

It is possible that the Hadrianic portrait was displayed in the cella of the Quirinal temple together with an image of Serapis, which may also have been the case in the Serapeum at Alexandria as suggested by

coins issued in 132–133 that show Hadrian and Serapis together in a temple (Geissen 1974–83, nos. 1084–86; Malaise 1972, 424–25; Birley 1997, 238; Taylor 2004, 252). The large niches of the pronaos, similar to those at the Pantheon would also have provided a suitably scaled location for the colossus and if displayed there, would suggest that the statue had a pendant for the second niche. Alternatively, if originally displayed in the Temple of Venus and Roma, the statue may have been salvaged during Maxentius' rebuilding campaign and the reorganization of its sculptural program. In general, the reuse of the colossus and its relocation to the Basilica Nova stands as an important early instance of the emerging late Antique phenomenon of transferring important works of sculpture to new locations within the city (Curran 1994). The acrolith's white marble head, limbs and chest likely contrasted with a gilded armature, giving the statue a chryselephantine appearance, like Phidias' statue of Zeus at Olympia. (Lapatin 2001; Parisi Presicce 2006a, 142–45, fig. 48; 2007; Safran 2006, 48). The statue may also have resembled the Hadrianic statue from the Olympieion at Athens (Safran 2006, 48). The marble feet, right hand and fragments of the arms, legs and chest survive. Like the head, the right hand is of Parian marble and has been mis-restored with an extended index finger; close examination reveals that the finger should be curled, like the rest of the fingers in order to hold a scepter and the mortise hole for its attachment is still clearly visible as well.²³ The statue's format followed compositional prototypes of seated representations of Jupiter (Cianciani and Costantini 1997). The scepter in the right hand, with thunderbolt in the left reverses the standard Jupiter Optimus Maximus Capitolinus type, but is known in other examples including the Alexander/Zeus from the House of the Vettii, possibly derived from a statue by Lysippus (Pompeii 6.15.1, *oecus* E; V. Sampaolo 1994, 493, no. 35). In addition several standing Jupiter compositions feature the scepter in the right, rather than the left hand, including the bronze portrait of Augustus from the "Basilica" at Herculaneum.²⁴

Despite the fact that Constantine is reputedly Rome's first Christian emperor, like many of his imperial predecessors, he has freely expropriated the Jupiter iconography of his defeated rival's statue together with the impressive new building for which it was designed.²⁵ Although authors such as A. Frashcetti have made much of Constantine's rejection of the cult of Jupiter Optimus Maximus Capitolinus, the cooption of the colossal Jupiter statue underscores his early tolerance of the old state gods and his willingness to exploit the associative power of their imagery.²⁶

The colossal portrait has also been connected with Eusebius' account of a statue of Constantine in Rome that was transformed into

a great trophy (μεγά τροπαιον) celebrating the battle of the Milvian bridge by having a cross added to the emperor's hand (*Eccl. Hist.* 9.9.10–11; L'Orange 1984, 71–74, 125; Safran 2006, 50–51; Van Dam 2011, 191–203; Bardill 2012, 206–11). The surviving right hand has no indications that it was modified to hold a cross or other salvific sign and thus fails to support an identification of the Conservatori colossus with Eusebius' statue; in fact, its double alteration from a pre-existing likeness of Hadrian and Maxentius, as well as its Jovine iconography likely precluded it. Nevertheless, it does underscore common perceptions that monumental images in Rome were subjected to reconfigurations in this period. The colossus may also be related to the golden statue set up by the Senate and described in the Panegyric of 313 as *sgnum dei* and *divinitati simulacrum* (*Pan.Lat.* 12.25.4; Bardill 2012, 212).

The colossal portrait as Jupiter was by no means the only image of Maxentius expropriated by his successor Constantine. Three additional portraits from Rome, including two cuirassed statues from the Baths on the Quirinal have also been reconfigured from earlier portraits of Maxentius.²⁷ Brick stamps confirm that these Baths, too, were actually initiated by Maxentius (Steinby 1986, 142). As with the Basilica and Colossus in the Forum, Constantine expropriated his rival's building, as well as the portraits which decorated it. Like Maxentius' other projects, the Baths were intended to re-affirm the importance of the city and underscore its antiquity and *aeternitas*. It is likely that the colossal Dioscuri on the Quirinal formed part of the Baths' decoration, although they too may have been salvaged from the adjacent temple precinct. As the divine saviors and protectors of the city, the Dioscuri were prominently featured on Maxentian coinage. Unlike their colossal counterparts from the Campus Martius and now on the Campidoglio, the Quirinal horsemen follow a less diffuse compositional type in which the horsemen are in dynamic poses and the horses themselves in motion (The type makes its first widespread appearance in the Severan period, Nista 1994). The Dioscuri on Maxentian coins adhere to the same more active composition, underscoring the links between Maxentius, the Quirinal Dioscuri, and the divinely sanctioned nature of the city itself. In addition, the Dioscuri had a long tradition within imperial ideology of close associations with imperial heirs, going back to the promotion of Gaius and Lucius as *principes iuventutis* and in their Maxentian context they may have been linked with his two sons (for Gaius and Lucius, see Poulsen 1991; see also Champlin 2011, for the linkage of the Dioscuri with Tiberius and Drusus, which may actually pre-date their association with Gaius and Lucius). M. C. Capanna dates the statues to the Severan period and sees them as alluding to Septimius Severus's

two heirs, Caracalla and Geta, as part of the sculptural program of the large Quirinal temple, identified by her as that of Hercules and Bacchus, also the patron deities of Caracalla and Geta (in Carandini (ed.) 2012, 282). After Constantine's expropriation of the complex, they would have been equally appropriate for Constantine's sons. The Dioscuri had been included in the sculptural program of the Temple of Venus and Roma and they were also associated with the wolf and twins on Maxentian coins as extensions of Romulus and Remus, as well as the Penates (Gagé 1936, 165; Castagnoli 1983, 7; Coarelli 1986, 21).

The colossal river gods on the Campidoglio which originally represented the Nile and the Tigris and a colossal seated statue of Roma may also have been salvaged from the Serapis complex for display in the new Baths. It is possible that the river gods decorated the corners of the temple's pediment (Ensoli 1996; 2000b, 271, n. 5; Coarelli 2001, 286–87; Taylor 2004, 258). If the columns of the pronaos were, in fact, recovered for the Basilica Nova, the pediment must no longer have been standing and its sculpture would have been available for reuse in other contexts, such as the decoration of the adjacent Baths; the two river gods may, in fact, have been re-adapted, together with the colossal Dioscuri, as part of a monumental nymphaeum for the Baths (Lorenz, 1979; Ensoli, 2000b, 271). Flaminio Vacca records the discovery of the seated statue of Roma near the area where Sixtus V had (re)located the Dioscuri; according to Vacca, the statue was acquired by Ippolito D'Este for his Quirinal gardens, the precursor of the Palazzo Quirinale (*Memorie* 41; Taylor 2004, 256, n. 129; Lanciani 1897, 430; 1902–12, 3, 217). The statue was eventually given by Gregory XIII to Cardinal Medici and is still today in the gardens of the Villa Medici (see Cagianò de Azevedo 1951, 142–43, no. 142, pl. 40. 75; Hoffmann 1981, 58; Picozzi 2010, 17).²⁸ Like the Quirinal river gods, the Medici Roma has a large cavity at the back of the statue which may suggest that it was at some point installed as pedimental sculpture and at 6 m tall, it is of an appropriate scale to have been the central sculpture of the large Quirinal temple's pediment (Taylor 2004, 257) and it also may have been salvaged for the Baths.²⁹ The display of the colossal statue at the Baths would have been consistent with Maxentius' overriding emphasis on Roma and the importance of the capital in his overall artistic and architectural program. The Baths further incarnated the *aeternitas* of the city as a repository of its storied artistic treasures including the Terme Ruler and Boxer, and perhaps the Belvedere torso as well (Barroero 1984, 118; Carinci *et al.* 1990, 13; Picozzi in Picozzi (ed.) 2011, 14).

As is well known from the Arch of Constantine, Constantine's

reconfiguration of earlier imperial images was not limited to representations of his defeated rival Maxentius. An over life-sized head discovered in 2005 in a drain at the southern edge of the Forum of Trajan has been recarved from a type 3 portrait of Domitian (Plate 10).³⁰ The head is worked for insertion, probably into a cuirassed statue body which would have been colossal in scale at approximately 4 m in height. Like the Conservatori colossus, it is a replica of Constantine's second portrait type. Although it has been suggested that the original portrait was Julio-Claudian, perhaps Caligula or Claudius (La Rocca and Zanker 2007, 148), the reworked image contains clear elements of physiognomy and coiffure from the original Domitianic likeness. The general configuration of the face, chin and mouth has been retained from Domitian's type 3 portraits. The hair over the ears is essentially unaltered, and Domitian's waved arrangement at the top of the head has not been substantially modified. If the identity of the Domitianic portrait were still known in the early 4th century, the reconfiguration may also have had deeper conceptual implications and would have underscored Constantine's membership in the new Flavian *gens*. Similar dynastic intertextuality may be operative in a portrait of Constantine in Boston, also re-elaborated from a pre-existing likeness of Domitian.³¹ The placement of Constantine's portrait in the Forum of Trajan would have further linked the current emperor of Rome with the Forum's illustrious founder, and there appear to have been multiple images of Constantine displayed there in addition to the reworked colossal portrait.³² After Constantine, Theodosius, and Honorius are the only other emperors to receive portrait dedications in the Forum of Trajan, and they, too, seem to be deliberately emphasizing their linkages to Trajan (Chenault 2012, 124).

Constantine's re-elaboration of pre-existing portraits is, in fact, so widespread that it suggests a very conscious predilection for re-used images which could fabricate an identity for the emperor based on the past. The reworked portraits are largely limited to Constantine's second portrait type, indicating that the programmatic recycling of earlier images was a phenomenon of the years immediately following the Battle of the Milvian bridge and which may have found its main impetus in Maxentius' own reconfiguration of previous representations, especially the Conservatori colossus. In addition to the likenesses reconstituted from pre-existing portraits of Maxentius and Domitian, at least eleven others have been recarved from earlier works of sculpture, including images of revered predecessors Augustus, Trajan, and Hadrian (Fittschen-Zanker 1985, 149–51; Knudsen 1988; Evers 1991, 799–800; Romeo 1999; Schäfer 1999; Hannestad 2007; La Rocca and Zanker 2007; Ambrogio 2010, 342, n.

111; Parisi Presicce 2012, 112–13). Two replicas of Constantine's second type, from Bolsena now in Viterbo (Plate 11) and (formerly) in a private collection in London have been redacted from likenesses of Augustus.³³ A portrait from the Giustiniani collection now in New York has been refashioned from Trajan (Plate 12), while a head in the Torlonia collection retains much of Hadrian's type 2 (Chiaramonti 392) coiffure.³⁴ In addition, Marina Prusac has also convincingly shown that an "unfinished" portrait of Trajan in Rome is in fact, a representation of Trajan in the process of being recarved into Constantine.³⁵ Indeed, the sheer number of Constantine's reworked type 2 portraits approaches in quantity the portraits of Nerva re-laborated from Domitian, approximately 80 percent of Nerva's surviving images, also clearly the result of very conscious ideological and aesthetic choices (Varner 2008, 143–46; Vout 2008).

The Arch of Constantine: authorship and amalgamation

Constantine's expropriation and extension of the Maxentian program of renewal and renovation reaches its fullest and most complex expression in the variegated historicism of the Arch of Constantine. Like the reconfiguration of the colossal portrait and the concomitant recycling of earlier imperial images, or the expropriation of Maxentius' rebuilding of the Temple of Venus and Roma, the Arch consciously positions Constantine as the culmination of imperial continuum through its programmatic re-use of major Trajanic, Hadrianic and Aurelian relief sculpture.³⁶ Furthermore, the design of the arch and its proportional relationships deliberately link it architecturally to both the arches of Septimius Severus and Titus and evokes their memories as well (Wilson-Jones 2000, 65–72). The architectural and topographical associations with the Arch of Titus reinforce the shared Flavian identity of Constantine and Titus. In fact, the memory of Titus remained potent enough, that later in the 4th century, Ammianus Marcellinus begins a list of canonical good emperors comparable to Julian with Titus on account of his wisdom (16.1.4; Hunt 1995, 287). Ultimately, the Arch's intimate linkages with the past endow Constantine with an impeccable imperial lineage and "sovereign legitimacy" (Brenk 1987, 105).

Although Maxentius had already positioned himself as a new Hadrian in re-using the colossal statue and reconstructing the Temple of Venus and Roma, the retrospective hermeneutics are greatly intensified on the Arch of Constantine. Indeed, the arch functions as a kind of extended portrait gallery which represents Constantine in his

own historical roles on the contemporary scenes of *adlocutio* and *liberalitas*, as well as in the multiplied guises of Trajan, Hadrian and Marcus Aurelius in their respective narrative reliefs. As is evident in the *adventus* scene from the Great Trajanic Frieze, Constantine's type 2 portrait has been reconstituted from Trajan's Paris Mariemont type in order for Constantine to become the *optimus princeps* and conqueror of the Dacians; Constantine also coopts Maxentius's use of the term *princeps* on the coinage and contemporary coins in gold and bronze minted at Rome, Ostia, Trier, Ticinum, and Arles c. 310–313 also explicitly allude to him as *optimus princeps* and include the legend SPQR (RIC 6, 222, no. 815 (*solidus* from Trier), 297, no. 114 (*solidus* from Ticinum), 390, nos. 345–52 (*folles* from Rome), 407, no. 69 (gold multiple from Ostia); RIC 7, 144, n. 1, 235, nos. 7–12 (*folles* from Arles)).³⁷ The imagery of the SPQR *Optimus Princeps* reverses with military standards and an eagle is also derived from Trajanic models. The coins may further allude to the bicentennial anniversaries of the dedication of the Forum of Trajan and Basilica Ulpia in 312, or the Column of Trajan in 313 (Pierce 1989, 389, n. 6). Constantine is additionally referred to as Optimus Princeps in several inscriptions (from northern Italy (CIL 5.8004, 8041, 8069, 8079, and 8080, AE (1939) no. 23). At the very end of his reign in 336, Constantine also adopts the title Dacicus Maximus, like Trajan, and restores Trajan's great victory monument, the Tropaeum Traiani at Adamklissi (ILS 8938; Schäfer 1999, 301, n. 44). Indeed, the author of the *Epitome de Caesaribus* seems to imply that Constantine felt a kind of historical rivalry with Trajan whom he is alleged to have called "*erbaparietaria*" (invasive wall weed) because of Trajan's propensity for affixing his name to so many prominent buildings (*Epit. Caes.* 41.13; Schäfer, 1999, 301; La Rocca and Zanker 2007, 153).

The arch also contains another oblique Trajanic reference incorporated into the Constantinian friezes. In the Battle of the Milvian Bridge as the south east corner of the arch, the drowning Maxentian cavalry is depicted wearing a decidedly non-Roman type of chain mail body armor very similar to that worn by the Sarmatian cavalry on the Column of Trajan and the narrative recalls scene 31 on the Column where Dacian horsemen drown in a river adjacent to a scene of Sarmatian horsemen. In addition, a dead Sarmatian wearing the distinctive armor also appears in the spiral directly above. In fact, the only appearance of the Sarmatians wearing their armor is in the scenes in the immediate vicinity, laterally and vertically surrounding the drowning Dacians. The Maxentian cavalry is likely to be the emperor's horse guard, the *equites singulares* and Maxentius himself may be the figure with outstretched right hand; the *equites* wore scale armor, but its depiction on the arch with long sleeves and trousers is

directly comparable to the Sarmatians, rather than more distinctly Roman cuirassed examples (Speidel 1986, 257–59).³⁸ Like the reuse of the Great Trajanic Frieze, or the Dacian captives incorporated into the attic, the Dacian and Sarmatian allusions in the Constantinian frieze effectively elides Maxentius' troops with Rome's famous foreign enemies.

In the reused tondi, Constantine subsumes Hadrian's *virtus* and *pietas* as expressed in the scenes of hunting and sacrifice. In both the boar and lion hunt tondi, enough of the original Hadrianic likeness is preserved to identify it as Hadrian's second portrait type (Chiaramonti 392) (Evers 1991, 791–92). The possible Gallienic reuse of the reliefs on the Arco di Portogallo may have provided an important precedent for the redeployment of Hadrianic material in spoliated imperial monuments. Furthermore, a counterclockwise reading of the tondi which follows the diachronic organization of the Constantinian friezes below them, culminates at the north west corner with the sacrifice to Hercules, the family god of Maxentius, now reclaimed, like his image at the Basilica Nova, on behalf of the new emperor and his family.

In the Aurelian panels, Constantine takes on the role of the philosopher emperor and accrues the glory from Marcus' German campaigns. Judging from the three panels that have not been recarved in the Palazzo dei Conservatori, as well as the fragmentary portrait in Copenhagen, the scenes originally depicted Marcus in his final portrait type. As with the Dacians in the Great Trajanic Frieze, the Germanic intonations of the Aurelian panels help to recast Constantine's victory over Maxentius and fellow Roman citizens as a triumph over foreign adversaries. Marcus may have also have been a particularly appropriate choice for Constantine, as his well known victory over the Quadi in 172, the so called rain miracle, was attributed by ancient authors to divine intervention (Dio 72[7].8.1, 10.2–3; Israelowich 2008); shortly after the victory both Apollinaris and Tertullian ascribe it as a Christian victory (Apoll. *Apologia*; Tert. *Ad Scap* 4; *Apol.* 5; Israelowich 2008, 87) and in the 4th century, Eusebius also presents the episode as an important Christian intervention (*Eccl. Hist.* 5.5.1–3). Thus both emperors shared divinely inspired victories over their adversaries, Marcus over the Quadi, and Constantine over Maxentius at the Battle of the Milvian Bridge. In addition, Eusebius presents Marcus as a decidedly pro Christian emperor (Barnes 1981, 137, 141–42). Augustus, also, is not absent from the Arch's potent historical allusions, as its inscription, with its pointed references to tyranny, a faction, and multiple triumphs elicits echoes of the *Res Gestae* of Augustus which were prominently visible on his Mausoleum (Mayer 2002, 192–94; 2006, 146–48). The Augustan references to victories in civil conflicts also historically reverberate with Constantine's triumph

over Maxentius.³⁹

Ultimately, the Arch derives a great deal of its authority from its borrowed elements in much the same way that later in the century the writings of Julian or Ammianus would self consciously incorporate quotations of past masters (Bonfante 1964, 403–4). Although it has been suggested that the programmatic use of the “good” emperors in literature is not fully developed until the Theodosian period (Liverani 2004, 394; 2005, 68) they are clearly a well established trope by the middle of the 4th century, as seen again in the work of Julian and Ammianus who consistently employs them as worthy historical *exempla* (Kelly 2005, 416); indeed Augustus, Titus, Trajan, Hadrian and Antoninus are so well known as “good emperors”, that they can be parodied by Julian in his Menippean satire, the *Caesares* written for the Saturnalia of 362. In fact, Julian’s use of Marcus throughout his writing has been characterized as “conventional” (Hunt 1995, 287). For late Roman authors and historians, both Trajan and Marcus are cast as the best emperors and are used as convenient historical foils for the accomplishments and personalities of contemporary leaders (Syme 1971, 89–94; Stertz 1977). Moreover, from Caracalla onward, several emperors, including Elagabalus, Severus Alexander, Carinus, Carausius, and most notably Maxentius himself had incorporated Marcus Aurelius into their official nomenclature. In an edict of Severus Alexander preserved in an early 4th century papyrus, both Trajan and Marcus are also paired as imperial ancestors especially worthy of admiration (P. Fay. 20; Hunt and Edgar 1934, 94–95; Peirce 1989, 390; Liverani 2004, 395, n. 44).

The historical references operative in the Arch of Constantine were legible in diverse ways and for multiple audiences (Elsner 2000, 172–75; 2003, 216–17). For those viewers who were unable to read the specific allusions to Trajan, Hadrian, and Marcus, or those unfamiliar with the original context of the reused reliefs, the scenes may have appeared as static representations of imperial authority, continuum and *aeternitas*, comparable to the aulic poetry of contemporary panegyric (Liverani 2004, 406–7; La Rocca and Zanker 2007, 149–50, n. 27). As M. Wilson-Jones has amply demonstrated the arch is the result of a highly sophisticated and richly evocative design which coordinates new and old elements (2000). As a complex visual artefact, the Arch is also resistant to modes of reading and reception largely based on literary models. While literary theory can be enormously useful for developing paradigms of reception and response, the Arch does not function in precisely the same way as a written text, especially in terms of its “authorship” and “readership.”⁴⁰ Like the Colossus of Hadrian, the monuments (presumably in some state of disrepair) from which the Trajanic, Hadrianic, and Aurelian

reliefs were derived would all have been noteworthy within the urban armature of the city; the Great Trajanic Frieze would have been conspicuous because of its sheer size and the Hadrianic tondi notable for both their unusual circular format and atypical subject matter, while the Aurelian panels come from an extensive cycle of at least twelve which may have been displayed on a quadrifrons arch (Angeloussis, 1984; De Maria 1988, 303–5; Torelli 1993; Boatwright 2010, 185–86). The fires of 283 and 307, as well as the monumental dislocations occasioned by the construction of Aurelian walls may have provided a plethora of salvageable material that could be reutilized in contemporary monuments like the Arch of Constantine in order to visually evoke the *aurea aetas* and the *felicitas temporum* (La Rocca 1992, 414). Given the strict laws governing urban decorum and the acquisition and use of spolia which emerged later, it is probably only grandiose imperial projects like the Arch of Constantine that could command premium public sculpture, even from semi-ruined monuments and their reuse may even have required imperial approval (*Cod. Iust.* 8.10.2; Liverani 2004, 412–16). Indeed, the designers of the Arch did not attempt to create an artistically unified monument that was stylistically seamless. Rather, the avant garde and emblematic style of the Constantinian reliefs in the frieze, spandrels and pedestals deliberately contrasts with the classicizing Trajanic, Hadrianic, and Aurelian elements in order to foreground their repurposed status. The various colored stones which enlivened the Arch, including its *giallo antico* columns, the green porphyry fascia of the architrave and deep purple porphyry surrounding the Hadrianic tondi further enhanced the heterogeneity of its component parts.

At least for a generation following the construction of the Arch, knowledge of the reliefs' original contexts and associations must have been etched in the collective and social memory of the urban populace and perhaps perpetuated orally for several more generations.⁴¹ Indeed, the dedicatory inscription of the arch explicitly acknowledges the urban populace's stake in the authorship of the Arch and its celebratory program. These reliefs do not necessarily need texts to ensure their identities. The strong persistence of anthropological social memory of Rome's public sculpture remains strong even today as witnessed by the centuries of preserved traditions surrounding works like the bronze equestrian Marcus Aurelius, or "talking statues" such as the Pasquino. Just as there is a strong expectation that late Antique readers and authors have a familiarity with Homer or Vergil, it is not unreasonable to expect a degree of visual literacy on the part of at least some ancient viewers that would allow them to recognize the Arch's explicit quotations of past monuments. Roman visual culture was in fact permeated with intentionally damaged or altered

monuments, like the re-used reliefs on the Arch of Constantine, and certain viewers would have been very well-schooled in their interpretation (Elsner 2003, 211–19). Judging from later legal discourse, the redeployment of physical material in new contexts was a living and vital process and the reused elements were referred to not in any disparaging way, but as *rediviva saxa*, renewed stones (Cod.Theod. 15.1.19; Alchermes 1994, 167, n. 2; Kinney 1997, 122, 124; Hansen 2003, 14, n. 10).

Furthermore, the Arch of Constantine did not stand in isolation, but was part of a master plan designed to underscore Constantine historical alignment with the “good” emperors of the past, as well, for the first time in Roman relief sculpture, to explicitly represent a victory in civil war; as a result, Maxentius, is conspicuously transformed into a *tyrannus* in the inscription of the arch (Brilliant 2007, 9–10). Constantine’s campaign against Maxentius, the Battle of the Milvian bridge, and his triumphant entry into the city are positioned directly below the tondi re-used from Maxentius’ admired predecessor Hadrian. The arch is also carefully situated in the Colosseum valley in close proximity to the newly restored Temple of Venus and Roma which was re-dedicated to Constantine and his family, effectively associating its aspects of *aeternitas* with the new Flavian *gens* (Aur. Vict. Caes. 40.26). Constantine’s coinage is also the last to feature the temple, with the legend *Liberatori Urbis Suae* pointedly underscoring its expropriation from Maxentius (RIC 6. 53, 348, 387, nos. 303–4; Coarelli 1986, 22). Furthermore, the coins make a distinct contrast between the new emperor as *Liberator* of the city and Maxentius, whose own numismatic issues had styled him as *Conservator Urbis Suae* (Marlowe 2010, 217–18). In addition, the Arch is located in close proximity to Temple of Divine Claudius which would have also provided an opportune onomastical reminder of Constantine’s promoted dynastic connections to the second imperial Claudius, Claudius Gothicus.⁴²

The Arch’s approach along the Via Triumphalis was carefully calculated so that its central bay framed the Colossus of Nero, which itself was a monumental embodiment of *aeternitas*; like previous emperors, such as Vespasian, Hadrian, and Commodus, Constantine sought to claim the Neronian Colossus and its solar imagery as his own (Marlowe 2006; Bergmann 2006, 149–53; Safran 2006). In this, too, he may have been closely following Maxentius, who appears to have re-dedicated the Colossus to the memory of his deified son, Romulus, as suggested by a fragmentary inscription re-used in the attic of the Arch of Constantine (Quilici Gigli 1988, 41; Pierce 1989, 404; Curran 2000, 62; Ensoli 2000, 66–90; Ziemssen 2006, 402; Marlowe 2010, 204, n. 20). Indeed, Maxentius’ program of Roman

renewal which had so earnestly sought to re-engage the imperial past and concomitant notions of *aeternitas* could not have ignored the Colossus. In fact, the placement of the colossal seated portrait in the Basilica Nova aligned it almost directly with the Neronian colossus which would have been visible through the large eastern windows, allowing the seated portrait to “view” metaphorically is colossal predecessor and visitors accessing the structure from its original eastern entrance would have just encountered the bronze colossus and readily connected it to the acrolithic portrait (Safran 2006, 56). As part of Constantine’s arrogation of his rival’s monumental legacy the re-investiture of the Colossus, like the reconfiguration of the portraits of Domitian, would have further conceptually linked the new Flavian emperor to the first Flavian emperor, Vespasian who had originally dedicated the statue in 75.

Although Constantine is indisputably the main protagonist of the altered portraits or the expropriated works of architecture, he is not always their main author, as the inscription of the Arch of Constantine makes clear, assigning the dedication to the Senate and People of Rome, or Aurelius Victor’s attribution of the rededication of the Temple and Venus and Roma and the Basilica Nova by the Senate (*Caes* 40.26: *urbis fanum atque basilicam Flavii meritis patres sacravere*). Nevertheless, the ideological underpinnings of the reconstituted likenesses or the carefully collaged assembly of the Arch of Constantine must have had the tacit, if not implicit approval of the new emperor. In effect, Constantine eschewed the outright censure and suppression of Maxentian imagery in favor of the reclamation of its historicized rhetoric as he forged an enduring imperial identity of his own and his scrupulous manipulation of Maxentius’ memory encompassed the annexation of major architectural monuments as well as the re-elaboration of numerous portraits. Constantine effectively capitalized on Maxentius’ ambitious artistic program and made it a fundamental aspect of his own public persona through a conscious policy of recuperation and reintegration. Ultimately, the reinterpretation of public portraits, like the colossal Hadrian-Maxentius-Constantine or the Trajanic, Hadrianic and Aurelian reliefs on the Arch of Constantine, reimagined a spoliated vision of Rome’s new emperor as both an assimilative amalgamation and inevitable culmination of the imperial past.

Abbreviations

RIC Roman Imperial Coinage

CIL Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum

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1 Maximian's building and restoration project is recorded in the Chronograph of 354, *MGH* 1, 148 (*His imper. Multae operae publicae fabricatae sunt: senatum, forum Caesaris, basilica Julia, scaena Pompei, porticos ii, nymphaeae iii, templa ii Iseum et Serapeum, arcum novum, therma Diocletianas*); Curran 2000, 44.

2 Although Gnifka has attributed these images to the Hadrianic program, (1994, 65–88), Bauer has rightly noted that they are more likely to be Maxentian, although they could replicate elements of the earlier decoration (1996, 104).

3 *Domino nostro/clementissimo/et piissimo/Maxentio/invicto.et providentissimo/semper Augusto/Manlius Rusticanus/v(ir) em(inentissimus) praef(ectus) praet(orio) devotus n(umini) m(aiestati)q(ue) e(ius) and Maximian Domino/victoriosissimo/Maximiano/Augusto/Pompeius Cato/v(ir) p(erfectissimus) rat(ionalis) eius.*

4 The 3rd-century restoration of the attic of the Colosseum also seems to have redeployed numerous re-used elements, including Antonine column capitals

identical to those re-used on the Arch of Constantine and it, too, would have had an recognizably spoliative appearance, Kinney 1997, 125.

5 Although a marble intarsia from Bovillae in the Colonna collection has been connected to the Maxentian dedication and reconstruction of the Temple of Venus and Roma (Cagiano de Azevedo 1960–61, 200–1), it seems to have been considerably earlier in date (E. Filieri in Picozzi 2010, 185).

6 Dresden, Albertinum, Skulpturensammlung, h. 0.61 m; L'Orange and Wegner 1984, 35–36, 114, pl. 27a–b; Evers 1992, 11–21, figs. 2, 8, 14; Romeo 1999, 212; Sena Chiesa (ed.) 2012, 189, no. 27 (M. Cadario); Stockholm, National Museum, inv. 106, h. 0.40 m; L'Orange and Wegner 1984, 35–36, pl. 27 c–d; Evers 1992, 11–21, figs. 6, 10, 13; Romeo 1999, 212; Hannover, Kestner Museum, inv. 1979.1; h. 0.492 m; Evers 1992, 9–21, figs. 1, 2, 4, 7, 9, 11–12; Romeo 1999, 212; Rome, Museo Torlonia, no. 600; L'Orange and Wegner 1984, 115, pl. 26; Evers 1992, 11–12; Romeo 1999, 210, figs. 21–22; For classicism and *romanitas* in Maxentius's portraits, see Romeo 1992, 202, 220, and for *romanitas* in Maxentius's over all artistic program, see Culhed 1994, 46, 63–67; Ellinsen 2003, 31.

7 See, for instance, a replica in the Museo Capitolino, Stanza degli Imperatori 57, inv. 360, h. 0.35 m; Fittschen and Zanker 1985, 134–36, no. 112, pls. 139–40.

8 Inv. 1622, h. 2.97 m; Fittschen and Zanker 1985, 147–52, no. 122, pls. 151–52; Kolb 2001, 206–8, no. M. 17; Varner 2004, 11, 217–18, 286–88, no. 9.4, figs. 209a–d; Parisi Presicce 2006a; 2007; Ruck 2007, 235–47; Prusac 2011, 147, no. 307, figs. 60a–h; Bardill 2012, 203–17, figs. 130–32, 134–37, 140–41; Parisi Presicce 2012, 15–17, figs. 2–3.

9 The second portrait type is also employed at precisely the same time for the recut likenesses on the Arch of Constantine; L'Orange and Wegner 1984, 77; Fittschen and Zanker 1985, 149; Parisi Presicce 2006a, 145–54.

10 Magazzino Sculture del Palazzo Nuovo, Musei Capitolini, inv. 102, h. 0.23 cm; Parisi Presicce 2006a, 148, figs. 59–60.

11 For instance, Constantius Chlorus, Copenhagen, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek 714, inv. 836; L'Orange and Wegner 1984, 110, pl. 25a–b. For Constantius's distinctive nose as a kind of dynastic indicator, see Smith 1997, 184–85; Van Dam 2007, 90–92; Bardill 2012, 11, 204.

12 Inv. 8618, h. 0.43 m (head); Picciotti Giornetti in A. Giuliano (ed.), 1979, 18–19, no. 21; De Angelis D'Ossat 2002, 206 (M. De Angelis D'Ossat).

13 Kinney (1997, 137), relying on the Loeb translation of Pliny by H. Rackham, reads Pliny's comments (35.36.94: *quas utrasque tabulas divus Augustus in fori sui celeberrimis partibus dicaverat simplicitate moderata; divus Claudius pluris existimavit utrisque excisa Alexandri facie divi Augusti imagines addere*) as a negative assessment of Claudius's transformation of the paintings which she contrasts with Augustus's *simplicitas moderata* in initially displaying the paintings in his Forum. The Latin, however, contains no explicit criticism of Claudius and Augustus's *simplicitas moderata* (restrained candor, rather than Rackham's restrained good taste) actually refers to the public display of the paintings in the most populous part of his Forum (*in fori sui celeberrimis partibus*), a fact that he is re-iterating from 35.10.27 (*in foro suo celeberrima in parte*). Isager is surely correct in stressing that the *simplicitas moderata* which he translates as modesty refers to Augustus choosing to display the famous paintings very publicly, rather than privately, and that Claudius's transformation of the portrait held ideological and political implications (1991, 120–21).

14 Domitia Longina: Stuttgart, Württembergisches Landesmuseum, inv. KK 317, 6.1 × 4.1 cm; Megow 1987, 263–64, no. B.31, pl. 38.1; Alexandridis 2010, 214 fig. 6; Faustina Minor/Julia Domna: Kassel, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, 16.3 × 10.7 cm; Megow 1987, 270–71, no. B 52, pls. 46.8, 47.2, 48.12.

15 As confirmed by ongoing excavations at the site carried out by D. Conlin and the University of Colorado, see Conlin 2007.

16 Museo, inv. 70; Blanck 1969, 54, no. A 31, pls. 22–23; Romeo 1999, 211, figs. 31–32 (with earlier literature); Prusac 2011, 143, no. 233; (formerly) Rome, private collection; Giuliano 1985, 7, figs. 5–8; Parisi Presicce 2012, 110.

17 Trajan: Ostia, Museo, inv. 442, Calza 1978, 83, no. 109, pl. 75; Marciana: Ostia, Museo, inv. 20, Calza 1972, 61, no. 92, pl. 54; Hadrian: Ostia, Museo, inv. 440, Calza 1972, 74, no. 118, pl. 69 and Evers 1994, 143, no. 79; Sabina: Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek 675, inv. 774, Johansen 1995a, 116, no. 43; Antinous: Valeri 2001 304, n. 18; Antoninus Pius: Ostia, Museo, inv. 433, Calza 1972, 87, no. 138, pl. 82.

18 Copenhagen, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek 768, inv. 832, h. 0.53 m; Johansen 1995b, 128, no. 53; Berlin, Pergamon Museum; Prusac 2006, 113, fig. 5; 2011, 142, no. 121, fig. 19; Rome, Museo Torlonia, inv. 603; Prusac 2006, 113, fig. 6, 2011, 142, no. 1213, figs. 20a–b.

19 Fragments of the colossus from the Forum of Augustus, Rome, Mercati Traianei, Ruck 2007, 279, no. 2; Musei Vaticani, Cortile della Pigna, inv. 5137; Ruck 2007, 279, no. 4. Ruck estimates the standing heights of the Forum of Augustus Colossus at 11 m and the Vatican colossus at 12. If the Conservatori colossus were a standing statue, Ruck estimates its height at 13 m (2007, 284, no. 39).

20 A. Cassatella 1999, 121 identifies statues of Hadrian and Sabina on coins of Antoninus Pius, RIC 3, 100, nos. 622–3, 113, no. 651, 114, no. 664.

21 For the identification as the Temple of Hercules and Bacchus, see Santangeli Valenziani 1991–92. For the Temple of Sol, see Lanciani 1894, 296–303 and 1897, 428–32. For the Temple of Salus, see Richardson, jr. 1992, 341–42 (Salus, Aedes). For the association with Serapis, see Coarelli 1982; Lolloi Barberi *et al.* 1995, 79–89; and Taylor 2004. The Egyptianizing statuary discovered on the Quirinal certainly seems to confirm cult activity to Serapis in this area. Two Bes telamones, discovered near the Quirinal temple in 1888 and now incorporated into the “Porta Magica” at Piazza Vittorio, may have ornamented a small Egyptianizing shrine, Capriotti Vittozzi 1999. In addition, Pirro Ligorio records a statue of Serapis found in the environs of the temple which were sold to Cardinal Ippolito D’Este in 1573, Lanciani 1902–12, 3, 213–14 and Taylor 2004, 256. A gray granite statue of a pharaoh found in the vicinity of the temple has also been attributed to it, Rouillet 1972, 40, cat. 158. Statues of Jupiter Amon and Isis, as well as a base depicting the Nile were also discovered in the environs of the complex, Capanna 2009, 158, fig. 1; a gray Egyptian granite statue of a crocodile now in the Palazzo Colonna is also likely to have come from the complex as well; Picozzi, (ed.) 2011, 108–10, no. 11 (E. Filieri); on the Egyptianizing sculpture, see also Picozzi in Picozzi (ed.) 2011, 15–16.

22 Both Richardson (1992, 342) and Strong (1953) also favor a Hadrianic date based on the style of the temple’s architectural ornamentation. On the state of the temple in the early 4th century, see Santangeli Valenziani 1991–92.

23 Inv. 789. The extended index finger was likely restored in the 17th century, Parisi Presicce 2007, 119; A nearly identical right hand, of Luna marble, also came to be associated with the colossus, although only the Parian hand was found together with the head in 1486 and belongs to the original acrolith. Both have been misrestored with extended index fingers and both probably should have been holding scepters. The two right hands may suggest the existence of a second colossal statue, commensurate in scale with the Hadrian/Maxentius/Constantine. For historical discussion of the two right hands, see L’Orange 1984, 71–74; Parisi Presicce 2006a, 130, 135–36, figs. 31–32. Parisi Presicce has clearly shown that the hand of Luna marble, which entered the collections of the Musei Capitolini sometime around 1829, came to be displayed next to the head and the Parian hand was transferred to the opposite side of the courtyard, where it is still visible. The

Luna hand was apparently discovered on the western slope of the Capitoline and exhibited in the studio of Antonio Canova; see also Safran 2006, 51–52.

24 Naples, Museo Nazionale Archeologico, inv. 5595; h. 2.5 m; Lahusen and Formigli 2007, 16–19, no. S 1; the Cologne cameo of Nero and Agrippina also presents Nero seated as Jupiter with scepter in his right hand, Cathedral, Dreikönigenschrein I B a 17, 8 × 6.4 cm; Megow 1987, 213–14, no. A 98, pl. 35.1–2; see also a cameo of Claudius in standing Jupiter format with scepter in the right hand and thunderbolt in left, formerly in the Arundel and Marlborough Collections, h. 4.0 × 3.0 cm; Megow 1987, 202, no. A 84, pl. 27.2 or a cameo of Germanicus with similar standing Jupiter pose, Kunsthistorisches Museum 20, inv. IX a 54, 7.0 × 5.5 cm; W. R. Megow 1987, 284–85, no. C 28, pl. 28.2.

25 Other reworked seated or standing statues of Jupiter include: Caligula/Claudius (Carsulae, Museum; h. 65 m; Varner 2004, 30, 233, no. 1.28, figs. 15a–c; Caligula/Claudius (Rome, Musei Vaticani, Sala Rotonda 551, inv. 242, from Otricoli, h. 0.78; Varner 2004, 10, n. 60, 27–29, 32, 45, 167, 233–34, no. 1.30, figs. 9°–d); Caligula-Augustus (Zadar, Museum, h. 2.3 m; Varner 2004, 32, 36, 229, no. 1.15, figs. 20a–d); Caligula-Augustus (Rome, Musei Vaticani, Museo Gregoriano Profano, inv. 9953, from Cerveteri, h. 0.715 m; Varner 2004, 31–32, 45, 228, no. 1.12); Domitian/Nerva (Copenhagen, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, 542, inv. 1454, h. 2 m; Varner 2004, 115–16, 262, no. 5.9, figs. 111a–e); Domitian-Nerva (Berlin; Schloss Klein-Glienicke, inv. G1 324, h. 1.7 m; Varner 2004, 115–16, 262, no. 5.8; Domitian/Nerva (Rome, Musei Vaticani, Sala Rotonda 548, inv. 246, h. 2.44 m; Varner 2004, 118, 266, no. 5.19, figs. 120a–b); see also a seated statue following the Jupiter composition whose portrait head has been reworked more than once and may have originally depicted Nero, then Domitian, then Nerva, Lucera, Museo Civico, inv. 25; Varner, 2004, 117; Prusac 2006, 107.

26 Curran 1996, 69. For Constantine's rejection of the Capitoline cult and the Capitoline in general, see Frascchetti 1999, 9–64. Although it has been suggested that the Arch of Constantine, as well as coins and panegyric consciously promote the emperor's association with the sun downplay traditional associations with Jupiter, the Conservatori colossus sounds an important cautionary note. On Constantine's use of solar imagery see Lindros Wohl 2001, 99–100; Bergmann 2006; Marlowe 2006.

27 Rome, Museo Capitolino, Stanza terrena a destra, 1.25, inv. 1769; Fittschen and Zanker (1985) 143–44, no. 119, pl. 148; Varner 2004, 286, no. 9.3, figs. 210a–c; Ambrogi 2010, 344–46, figs. 52–53; and, from the Baths of Maxentius and Constantine: Rome, Campidoglio, Balustrade; Ss. Giovanni in Laterano, narthex; see von Heintze 1979; L'Orange and Wegner 1984, 55, 58–59, 126, pl. 43–44; Fittschen and Zanker 1985, 144–45, no. 120, pls. 149–50, 147, no. 121, n. 10, 151, no. 122, rep. C13; Romeo 1999, 205; Varner 2004, 286, 288, nos. 5, 9.2; Parisi Presicce 2006, 156; Deppmeyer 2008 II, 430–34, no. 229.

28 An alternative theory identifies the statue mentioned by Vacca as that currently in the gardens of Castello Massio at Arsoli which was apparently moved by Sixtus V from the Palazzo Quirinale to the Villa Montalto and eventually transferred by the Massimo to Arsoli, Barroero (ed.) 1984, 118.

29 The river gods and the Roma all seem to of Procennesian marble, Picozzi (ed.) 210, 17, n. 25.

30 Mercati Traianei, FT 10037, h. 0.60 m; Bianchi 2006; Parisi Persicce 2006, 137; Zanker 2006, 17–19; Hannestad 2007, 102, 1.810; La Rocca and Zanker 2007; Meneghini 2009, 132–33; Trunk 2010, 72; Prusac 2011, 147, no. 309, figs. 61a–e; Chenault 2012, 123; Parisi Presicce 2012, 112, fig. 1; Sande (2012).

31 Museum of Fine Arts, inv. 89.6, h. 0.392 m; Varner 2004, 124, 269, no. 5.30, figs. 129a–d.

32 Two other statues bases were dedicated to Constantine by C. Ceionius Rufus

Volusianus (CIL 6.1140) and Q. Attius Granius Caelestinus (CIL 6.1143), La Rocca and Zanker 2007, 155; Chenault 2012, 123. Towards the end of Constantine's reign, the Forum became the locus for display of senatorial portrait statues, including some with reused statue bases, Chenault 2012, 121.

33 Viterbo, Museo Nazionale Etrusco (formerly Rome, Villa Giulia, inv. 104973), h. 0.375 m; Giuliano 1991, 3–6, figs. 1–4; Giuliano 1997, pl. 7.3–4; London; 1991, 7–8, figs. 9–11; 1997; Romeo 1999, 214, figs. 34–6.

34 New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 26.229 (Fittschen and Zanker 1985, 150 no. 8; Schäfer 1999); Rome, Museo Torlonia 619 (Fittschen and Zanker 1985, 150–51, no. 11; Evers 1991, 799–800, fig. 9; Prusac 2011 152, no. 396, fig. 107). Other type 2 portraits which exhibit signs of recarving are: Copenhagen, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek 774a, inv. 3147 (Fittschen and Zanker 1985, 150, no. 7; Johansen 1995b, 170, no. 74); Grottaferrata, Museum, inv. 1149 (Fittschen and Zanker 1985, 149, no. 1; Romeo 2008); Madrid, Prado 125 E; Fittschen and Zanker 1985, 149–50, no. 3; Schröder 1993, 296–98, no. 89; Rome, Musei Vaticani, Galleria Chiaramonti, 35.16, inv. 1749 (Fittschen and Zanker 1985, 150, no. 10); Rome, Palazzo Mattei, Cortile (Fittschen and Zanker 1985, no. 6; Evers 1991, 799, who suggests the possibility that it is recarved from an ideal Polykleitan composition, such as Dresden youth or the “Narcissus”); Tunis, Musée du Bardo inv. C 77 (Fittschen and Zanker 1985, 150, no. 4).

35 Palazzo dei Conservatori, Giardino Romano 26, inv. 1292, h. 0.61 m; Fittschen and Zanker, 1985, 42–3, no. 43, pl. 48; Prusac 2006, 25–26, figs. 18–19, 2011, 148, no. 314.

36 For a review of scholarship on the Arch proposing programmatic aspects of the re-use, first proposed by L'Orange in L'Orange and von Gerkan 1939, 190–91, see Liverani 2004, 383–99. Although a Hadrianic date has been proposed for the Arch (i.e. Conforto *et al.* 2001 with earlier literature), archaeological, archeometric, stylistic and iconographic evidence all seem to confirm the arch's Constantinian origins (see Pensabene and Panella 1993–94; Pensabene and Panella (eds.) 1999; Wilson-Jones 2000; Kleiner 2001; Pensabene 2006).

37 Radnóti-Alföldi 1963, 57–59; Mayer 2002, 199; Schäfer 301–2; Liverani 2004, 395, n. 43 (citing only the issue from Trier dated 310–313); Chenault 2012, 122.

38 For a more typical Roman scale armor cuirass, compare a bust of Clodius Albinus in the Museo Capitolino, Stanza degli Imperatori 37, inv. 463, h. 0.67 m; Fittschen and Zanker 1985, 91–92, no. 80, pls. 97–99.

39 Rufinus's translation of *Eusebius's Ecclesiastical History* also seems to suggest that the original Latin inscription associated with the statue to which Eusebius ascribes the salvific sign, deliberately invoked Augustan precedents, Van Dam 2011, 192–93.

40 Elsner points out the theoretical problems that arise in art historical discourse that does not adequately address the differences among “linguistically based semiotics, of semiotics as a culturally based system of communication, and of a more directly object based semiotics” (2003, 210).

41 J. Assmann posits that “cultural memory” as an aspect of “collective memory” extends “living memory” for three generations, 2006, 8–9.

42 For Constantine's putative descent from Gothicus, see Chausson 2007, 25–96.

LATE ANTIQUE HONORIFIC SCULPTURE IN CONSTANTINOPE

Sarah E. Bassett

From the 2nd century through the 6th, honorific sculpture, the free-standing, full-length portraits of prominent citizens dedicated as testament to public gratitude towards and esteem for individuals who had performed acts of civic benefaction, was a commonplace in the cities of the Roman Empire. Whole populations of sculptured worthies, a roster that included such dignitaries as local magistrates, provincial governors, priests, priestesses, orators, and emperors, crowded the fora, streets, and public gathering places of cities such as Rome, Carthage, Antioch, and Ephesos (Hanfmann 1975; Vermeule 1977; Bauer 1996; Bauer and Witschel 2007; Gehn 2012).

Although a relative latecomer to the urban scene, Constantinople was no exception to this rule. From its 4th-century re-foundation by Constantine the Great into the 7th century, honorific sculptured dedication was an important aspect of the city's urban development as images of emperors, their wives, family members, and high ranking imperial officials were erected in and around the great public spaces of the capital. These monumental public displays included such spectacular pieces as an image of Constantine the Great (305–337) as Helios on a porphyry column in the emperor's eponymous Forum and a stylite equestrian statue of Justinian (526–565) in the Augusteion (Stichel 1982, 105–12; Bauer 1996, 158–62, 173–77; Bassett 2004, 192–204; Bardill 2012, 28–42). Although more familiar than other sculptured figures because of repeated mention in the historical record, these two great showpieces represent but a small portion of the Constantinopolitan honorific demographic. Far more common a sight in the sculptured displays that populated the city's fora, streets and public gathering places were the more modest types of single figure dedications that played a familiar part in the Roman civic

sculptured repertoire. Displayed on bases or columns, these monuments included military cuirass figures, *chlamys* and toga statues as well the occasional female representation (Gehn 2012, 208–16). On the evidence of literary and graphic sources, this sculptured population numbered somewhere around 90 pieces by the middle of the 6th century and was, in terms of subject matter, overwhelmingly imperial. What was the purpose of this gathering, and how visually did it make its appeal? This paper will consider these two questions by first outlining and commenting upon the evidence for this particular class of sculpture and its display, and then proposing some ways in which to think about its reception.

First the evidence: as is generally the case with things Constantinopolitan, the material record is limited. The city's long and sometimes violent history has resulted in the nearly complete destruction of the physical record, and the continuous inhabitation of the site in modern times has worked against systematic archaeological investigation with the result that documentation for sculptured display relies on a combination of literary and material evidence in which the textual sources provide the lion's share of information.

These circumstances notwithstanding it is noteworthy that a small body of honorific sculpture, a scant fourteen pieces, survives as documentation for the larger sculptured population. With the exception of two pieces whose Constantinopolitan provenance is likely but not absolutely demonstrable, all are in the Istanbul Archaeological Museum, having arrived there for the most part as a result of salvage excavations contingent upon modern construction projects in Istanbul. Although all of the surviving materials will be considered, these pieces of secure Constantinopolitan provenance form the core of this study.

The earliest of the surviving fragments are those of two porphyry *chlamys* statues, Istanbul Archaeological Museum 5797 and 73.27 (Fıratlı 1990, 8, pl. 4 nos. 7–8; Gehn 2012, 346–48). The former dates to the 4th century, and the latter to the later 4th or 5th century. Although the porphyry medium indicates clearly that these were imperial portraits, their actual identity is not known.

A set of more securely identifiable imperial images follows. Istanbul Archaeological Museum, inv. 5028 (Plate 13), the portrait known as the Beyazit Head and generally thought to be an image of Arcadius (395–408), dates to c. 400 (Fıratlı 1990, 7; Kiilerich 1993, 87–88, 94–95). A marble head identified as Theodosius II (408–450), Musée du Louvre MA1036 (Fig. 5.1), which is thought to have come from Constantinople in the 16th century, dates to the decade 430–440 (Delbreuck 1933, 217; Weitzmann 1979, 22; Prusac 2011, 74). Finally, a colossal bronze cuirass figure (Fig. 5.2) now in Barletta is thought to represent Marcian (450–457) (Delbreuck 1933, 219–26;



Fig. 5.1. Theodosius II, Musée du Louvre, MA1036, photo: S. E. Bassett.



Fig. 5.2. Marcian, Barletta (after Weitzmann 1979, 29).

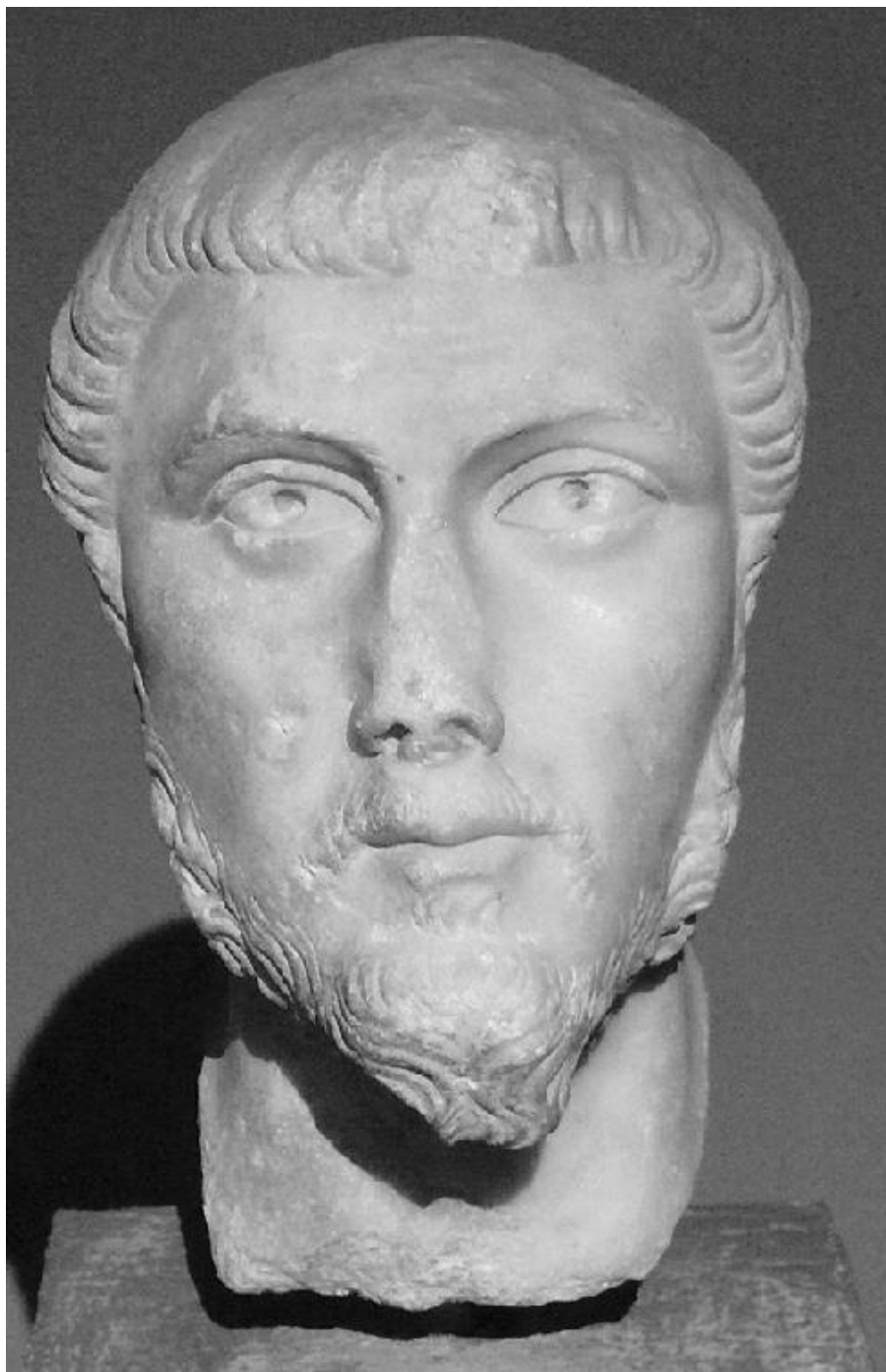


Fig. 5.3. Male head, Istanbul Archaeological Museum, inv. 5278, photo: S. E. Bassett.

Four unidentifiable male heads in marble complement the imperial roster: Istanbul Archaeological Museum, inv. 5278 (Fig. 5.3), 73.26,

4719, 4812 (Fıratlı 1990, 14–15, pl. 10, figs. 19–20, pl. 11, figs. 22–24; Kiilerich 1993, 110–11). All are bearded and approximately life-size with dates ranging from the late 4th or early 5th century to the 6th. Finally there are the remains of five standing male portraits from the late 4th and 5th centuries. These include two *togati*, Istanbul Archaeological Museum 4417 (Fig. 5.4), from the Tahtakale neighborhood of Istanbul in marble, and Istanbul Archaeological Museum 769 (Plate 14), in alabaster from the Laleli district (Fıratlı 1990, 12–13; Gehn 2012, 349–52). The three remaining statues wear the *chlamys*: Istanbul Archaeological Museum 5077 (Fig. 5.5 and 5158 A and B (Fıratlı 1990, pl. 5, fig. 10; Gehn 2012, 349–51), two badly damaged figures in alabaster, which appear from their coloration to have been burned, and Istanbul Archaeological Museum 4051 (Fig. 5.6) in marble (Fıratlı 1990, 8–9, 13; Gehn 2012, 352–53).



Fig. 5.4. Togatus, Istanbul Archaeological Museum, inv. 4417, photo: S. E. Bassett.



Fig. 5.5. Chlamydatus, Istanbul Archaeological Museum, inv. 5077, photo: S. E. Bassett.

Fragmentary and battered though these remains be, they allow certain observations. To begin with, most of the surviving torso fragments derive from what appear to have been newly-manufactured portraits, a significant fact in a period when a good deal of honorific sculpture was created by inserting heads into bodies of earlier manufacture. By contrast, some of the surviving heads show evidence of possible re-cutting, as in the case of the head of Theodosius II whose receding chin suggested re-cutting to Richard Delbreuck (1933,

217) and Marina Prusac (2011, 74, 149); however, given that other members of the Theodosian house, among them Arcadius, share a similar profile (Figs. 5.7 and 5.8), the appearance of the Louvre portrait may also record a characteristic physiognomic trait. For all of these sculptures the decades of Theodosian rule in the later 4th and the 5th centuries represent the most common dates of manufacture. Eleven of the fourteen fragments are associated with this period, against two early 4th-century examples and two later 5th- or 6th-century pieces.

In addition, it is clear that among the surviving dedications imperial portraits dominate. Five of the fragments may be clearly associated with imperial figures whether identifiable, as in the case of Arcadius, Theodosius, and Marcian, or not, as in the case of the porphyry fragments.



Fig. 5.6. Chlamydatus, Istanbul Archaeological Museum, inv. 4051, photo: S. E. Bassett.

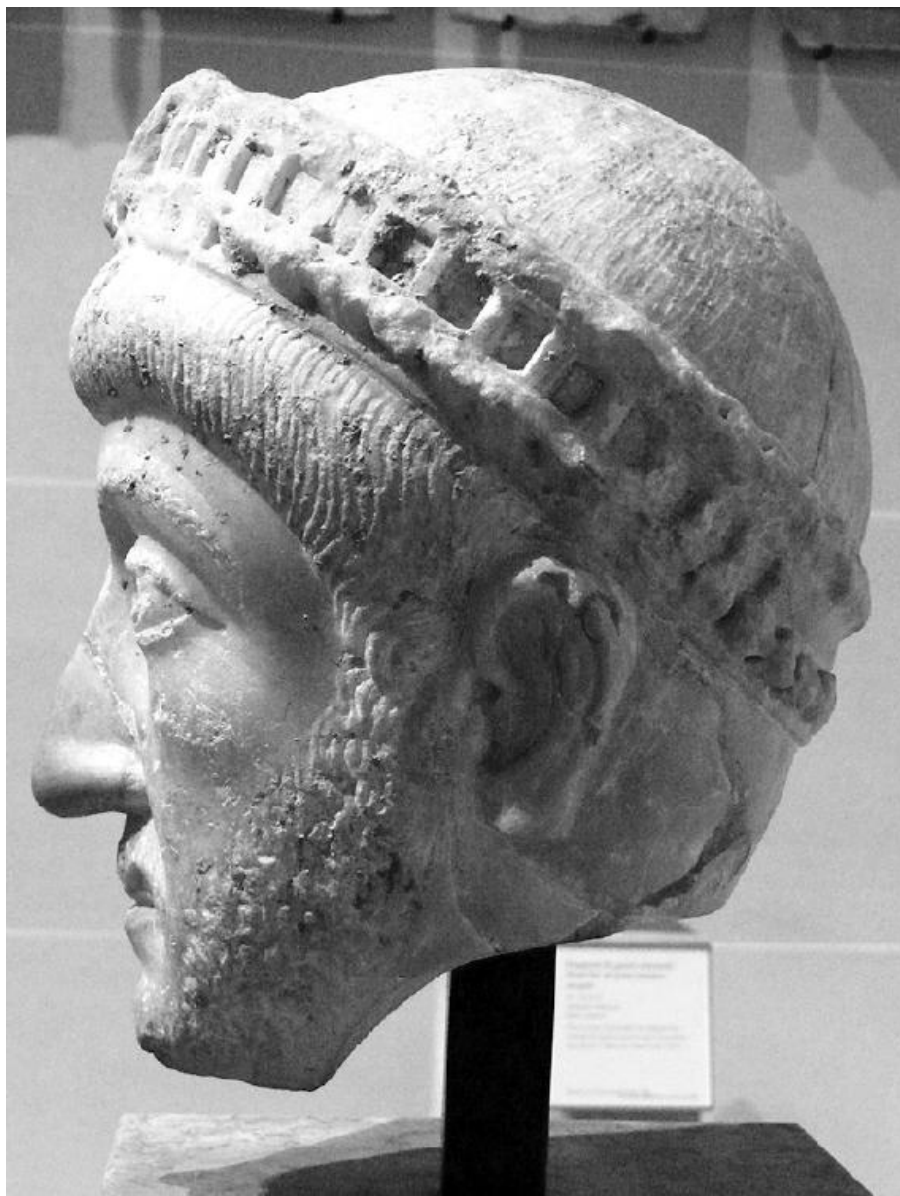


Fig. 5.7. Profile view of Theodosius II, Musée du Louvre, inv. MA1036, photo: S. E. Bassett.

Given their unfamiliar, idiosyncratic physiognomies, the three later portrait heads are probably non-imperial, and the remaining sculpture, that of the *chlamydati* and *togati*, is ambiguous in nature given that the costume of the individual figures may be worn by emperors and high ranking officials alike. Whether imperial or not, the fragments show three of the basic figural types of the later Roman portrait repertoire: the military cuirass figure and the two preferred

civilian types, the *chlamydatus* and the *togatus*.

Scale ranges widely. The bronze figure of Marcian stands at 5.1 m: although the legs are restored from the knees down, the general sense of scale is likely to be accurate (Delbreuck 1933, 213). More common are the smaller figures, the life sized portraits of toga and *chlamys* wearers. Measurements for the figures in their broken states range, and suggest that originally they must have stood to around 1.50 m (Fıratlı 1990, 8–9, 12–13; Gehn 2012, 346–53).

The figures are sculptured in a variety of materials: marble, porphyry, bronze and alabaster. This was a varied and luxurious array, and damaged though the sculpture be, it is clear from the remaining fragments that every effort was made to highlight the splendour of the media. The marble and alabaster dedications preserve traces of what was originally a very high polish, and it is likely that the porphyry fragments were similarly worked.

This interest in luxury materials extended to detail. Richard Delbreuck (1933, 224) described traces of gilding on the cuirass and face of the statue of Marcian together with the use of silver for rendering the whites of the eyes. In a similar vein, all of the portrait heads have insets for mounting coloured glass or stone in the eyes, and carved bezels for mounting jewels, whether real or paste, appear on the diadem crowning the head of Theodosius. In the case of the portrait of Arcadius, where jewels on the diadem are actually carved, it is likely that they were painted. In short, opulence was the order of the day.

Applied colour may have enhanced this sense of elaboration. On the example of two dimensional representations such as the floor mosaics from the hunting villa at Piazza Armerina or manuscripts such as the Rossano Gospel and literary sources, it is possible that colour was also a feature in the rendering of costume (Gehn 2012, 22–25); however, in the absence of technical study this suggestion must remain speculation.

The display of sculpture took place throughout the city. Late antique Constantinople was replete with venues for the exhibition of public sculpture (Fig. 5.9). The city's monumental core, which had been elaborated according to a Constantinian mandate between 324 and 330, was built around an armature of streets and public spaces constructed during the reign of Septimius Severus (193–211) at the western edge of the old Greek town of Byzantium. At the heart of this armature stood the forum known as the Augusteion, a large, rectangular space of uncertain dimension. Nearby, the Milion, a quadri-form arch marking the confluence of three colonnaded avenues, the major east-west axis of the Mese, its extension, the Regia, which ran along the south flank of the forum, and an unnamed avenue

that lead north to the Golden Horn, offered a second venue. Two further areas, the Basilica, a peristyle housing a library and temple, and the military parade ground, or Strategeion, stood northwest of the Augusteion. The Hippodrome and the Baths of Zeuxippos rose to the south (Bassett 2004, 17–36).. To the west, in areas initially claimed for development under Constantine, three major fora, those of Constantine, Theodosius, and Arcadius, opened out along the Mese. The Mese itself forked halfway between the Forum of Theodosius and that of Arcadius. A Capitolium preceded by a space known as the Philadelphion marked this division. Later developments saw the additions of fora dedicated to Marcian and the emperor Leo (Bassett 2004, 79–84).



Fig. 5.8. Profile view of Head of an Emperor ("Beyazit Head"), Istanbul Archaeological Museum, inv. 5028, photo: S. E. Bassett.

Find spots for the sculptured fragments suggest the distribution

within this ancient plan. The two porphyry *chlamydati*, numbers 5797 and 73.27, emerged from the area around Hagia Sophia as did the late 5th- or 6th-century head, number 4812 (Fıratlı 1990, 7–8, 15; Gehn 346–48). The two alabaster *chlamydati*, numbers 5077 and 5158, were discovered during excavation for the new court house in the area between the At Meydan and the Divan Yolu of modern Istanbul (Fıratlı 1990, 8–9; Gehn 352–53). The head of Arcadius, number 5028, came to light during excavations for a new university building in the Beyazıt district (Fıratlı 1990, 7). Two more fragments were found further to the west in the area of the Laleli mosque, an alabaster *togatus*, number 769, and another male head, number 4719 (Fıratlı 1990, 12–13, 15; Gehn 2012, 349–52). Although no Istanbul find spot is known, the colossal bronze statue of Marcian is thought to have stood atop the column dedicated in his name to the north and west of the Laleli mosque (Delbreuck 1933, 224). Still further north and west, another head came to light in the Fatih district, number 5278 (Fıratlı 1990, 14). Two statue fragments emerged along the shore of the Golden Horn, the marble *togatus* from Tahtakale neighborhood, number 4417, and the *chlamydatus*, number 4051, from the site of the new post office in Sirkeci (Fıratlı 1990, 12–13; Gehn 2012, 352–53).

unearthed from the area of the Strategeion, the long military parade ground that bordered the port and market facilities on the Golden Horn.

Slim and battered though it be, the sculptured record nevertheless hints at the nature of the city's honorific display. Find-spots suggest city-wide distribution in major public venues, while the sculpture itself points to a dedicatory boom in the later 4th and 5th centuries, the period of Theodosian rule. Further the surviving pieces not only indicate variety in scale, from the life-size to the colossal, but also hint at a tendency to richness in media.

Literary, epigraphic and graphic evidence bolster this picture. These materials, which are as varied as the archaeological one is limited, include texts in diverse genres that range in date from the 4th century through the 17th. Within this varied catalogue two sources, the 8th-century *Parastaseis syntomoi chronikai* and its 10th-century derivative the *Patria Konstantinopoleos*, supply the bulk of the references. Other important sources include but are not limited to the *Chronicon Paschale*, the *Greek Anthology*, Theophanes's *Chronographia*, and the *Historiarum Compendium* by Georgius Cedrenus. Inscriptions from the late antique period and graphic works, for the most part the drawings of European travellers to the Ottoman city, provide additional information about the sculptured installations (Freshfield 1922; Oberhummer 1922; Lehman 1959; Mango 1959; Engemann 1989).

Like the sculptured finds themselves, this evidence is largely random, there being no systematic commentary on or record of honorific dedications. Thus in literary accounts mention of sculpture appears generally as a descriptive aside in the course of a larger narrative, its function being to establish and characterize a context. Epigraphic materials are similarly random, both in terms of actual finds and in terms of their historical documentation in the written record. Finally, the graphic record, which generally postdates the 15th century, represents the interests of western travellers who brought with them a taste for the monumental and the spectacular. Given the random nature of the material documentation, it is interesting and important that the evidence provided in the literary, epigraphic and graphic record corresponds generally to that of the sculptured material itself. It also expands upon this data, helping to create a richer context for the surviving pieces.

Thus, confirming the evidence of the find spots, the literary record describes display venues at the Augusteion, the Milion, the Hippodrome, the Regia, and the entrance to the Great Palace, the Chalke Gate, in the city's monumental core (Marcellinus Comes, III, 4 and I, 8; *Parastaseis syntomoi chronikai* 11, 31, 67, 68, 34–35a, 19, 5b, 32–33, 44a, 77, 80). Numbers culled from these references suggest a

hierarchy of display areas. Of these the most popular was the Augusteion. Approximately 20 statues dedicated to members of each of the city's ruling dynasties stood here. Equally well populated with approximately 20 statues between them were the Chalke Gate and the Regia. The Milion followed with about sixteen statues. In the western territories the most prominent display areas were the sequence of imperial spaces along the Mese. Approximately seven statues of Constantine and the members of his family stood at the Capitol-Philadelphion complex and six more in the Forum of Constantine (*Parastaseis syntomoi chronikai*, 58, 16, 59). Standing in the shadow of the historiated columns in the two Theodosian fora, there were at least 12 statues of members of the Theodosian dynasty in the Forum of Theodosius and the Forum of Arcadius (Theophanes I, 126 and 231; *Chronicon Paschale* I, 565, 5; *Greek Anthology* XVI, 65; Cedrenus I 566,4; Nicetas Choniates I, 634, 649, 653).

Throughout the city, the peak of this new sculptured production appears to have been in the late 4th and early 5th centuries, during the period of the Valentinian and Theodosian dynasties, a fact which also corresponds to the evidence of the sculpture itself. In the later 4th century the number of imperial figures more than doubled with approximately 43 Theodosian statues mentioned in contrast to the Constantinian dynasty's 23 (*Chronicon Paschale*, 528–29; Cedrenus 1.564; *Parastaseis syntomoi chronikai* 7, 11–12, 16, 34, 36,44a, 49, 57–58, 68; Mango 1959, 46, 48; Janin 1964, 59–64, 66, 69, 73; Stichel 1982, 83–87, 90, 94–101; Bauer 1996, 148, 162, 166, 173, 227). For the later 5th and 6th centuries, that is from the beginning of the reign of Zeno (474–475) through to the end of that of Phocas (602–610) the total number of documented sculptured representations numbers about 35 (Stichel 1982, 102–15). Also consistent with the archaeological information is the predominance of imperial statues.

As the numbers attest, the literary record describes a robust sculptured population, one far larger than the surviving fragments indicate. It also expands upon the physical evidence to indicate types of statues not found among the material evidence. Thus the equestrian statue, that most characteristic of imperial monuments, appears among the city's honorific dedications only in textual sources. At least three such examples are known: one in honour of Theodosius I, a second in honour of Arcadius, and a third in honour of Justinian (Stichel 1982, 85–87, 105–12; Bauer 1996, 198–201, 158–64). Texts also provide information about sculptured media with references to figures in bronze, gilded bronze, silver (Marcellinus Comes III, 4 and I, 8; *Parastaseis syntomoi chronikai* 12, 66, 68; Theophanes I 126.2, I 231.27, I 412.6; *Chronicon Paschale* I 565, 5 and 571, 17; Cedrenus I 566,4; Nicetas Choniates I 634, 649, 653).

Finally, the literary and epigraphic evidence also elaborates the list of honorands. While most references are in fact to emperors, their wives or their children, a handful mentions non-imperial subjects. High ranking imperial officials, among them consuls, senators, prefects, and chamberlains, received these dedications as did military figures such as generals. Thus the consuls Proclus and Aurelianus were honoured as was Longinus, Prefect of Ravenna and a cousin of Heraclius, Nicetas (*Greek Anthology* 16, 48; 16, 73; 16, 39; 16, 46 and 47). As is the case with the general record, the majority of these dedications cluster in the later 4th- and early 5th-century period of Theodosian rule.

These sources also provide new information, specifically evidence for patronage. References in the *Parastaseis syntomoi chronikai* together with inscriptions, not only those surviving but also those recorded in texts such as the *Greek Anthology*, indicate that patronage was under the control of the city prefect. A statue base recording a dedication to Eudoxia, the wife of Theodosius II, names Simplicius, Prefect of the City of Constantinople in 403, as patron (*CIL* III/1, 736; Sevckenko 1969; Gottwald 1906/07). On the Column of Marcian the base indicates that Tatianos, prefect in 450/452 oversaw that monument's elevation (*CIL* III/1 738). Later, in the 6th century, the then prefect Julianus dedicated statues first to Justin II (565–578) and his wife Sophia and then to Tiberius II and his wife Anastasia (*Parastaseis syntomoi chronikai* 81).

That said, other inscriptions indicate that the dedication of honorific sculpture was not the exclusive provenance of the prefect. Chrysophios, a relative of Theodosius II, is recorded as the patron of a column in the emperor's honor, and Konstantios, a praetorian prefect, is said to have funded a statue of Leo I (Bauer 1996, 268).

As this body of evidence makes clear, the great public spaces of Constantinople were thick with honorific dedications in a variety of dazzling media. For the most part imperial, they were the result of patronage at the very highest levels: from generals, imperial family members, and, above all, the chief city administrator, the *praefectus urbi Constantinopolis*. This overwhelming emphasis on imperial honorands and the general splendour of their sculptured presentation is unknown in other late Roman urban centres, where the representational focus was on local worthies and the standard representational medium was marble. Given the status of Constantinople as the later Roman Empire's premier city, this imperial emphasis is hardly surprising as emperors and other high ranking officials were the local elite. Thus, the sculptured installations of Constantinople differed in degree but not in kind from the honorific displays seen in other urban centres. Like the sculptured installations

of such cities as Aphrodisias or Corinth, the public dedication of portrait images in Constantinople was understood not only as a way of honouring individuals, but also a means of civic glorification and with it the documentation of urban history with the difference that such glorification and documentation took place on the imperial plane (Smith 1999).

Let us consider first the ways and means of imperial glorification. Constantinople, the Roman Empire's premier city, provided the ceremonial stage on which the emperor acted both transiently in his breathing, human form, and more permanently in his static, sculptured image (Bauer 1996, 167). That sculptured image established the emperor's ongoing presence in the city. It did so with images which were understood not as art in the modern sense but rather as representations of the splendour of a human subject worthy of a veneration that hovered on the borderline of worship (*Codex Theodosianus* 15.4.1; Bauer 1996, 167). That said, the fact remains that sculpture was also the work of human artifice and as such the result of an aesthetic calculation designed to give visual form to the emperor, both as an individual and as an ideal. What, therefore, were the visual strategies marshalled to create the image of imperial splendour?

As the surviving fragments indicate the sculptured range was true to established portrait iconography: there were absolutely no representational surprises. Whether civilian or military, the surviving body types conform to late antique portrait norms for dress and attribute, the imperial portrait heads appear as a set of recognizable if idealized individuals, each wearing the diadem, and the non-imperial heads show the kind of sober observation of distinctive individual physiognomies characteristic in late antiquity.

The manipulation of style, by which I mean the treatment of such formal elements of representation as line, mass, colour, and composition, bolsters the iconographic distinction between imperial and non-imperial images. Consider, for example, the portrait of Arcadius (Fig. 5.1). The emperor appears as a full-faced youth. He meets his public with a serene, steady gaze characterized by wide, open eyes, a straight, sharp nose with delicate, slightly flaring nostrils, and a small, closed mouth. A cap of neat hair falls evenly onto a smooth, unlined brow. An elaborate, pearl-studded diadem with a large central jewel crowns the head.

Clear, geometric form and a generalized sense of symmetry define the portrait's overall structure: the cylindrical neck merges into the vertical oval of the face which is in turn capped by the spherical crown of hair and diadem. In the juxtaposition of these elements there is a play between the horizontal and the vertical. At the same time,

the external profile, which is without any overt breaks, defines a smooth transition between these forms to unify them. Within the face itself, the eyes dominate. Conceived three dimensionally, they emerge curving from their orbital sockets, their lids and brows sculptured in terms of sharp lines and smooth planes that reiterate the overall shape of the face. Delicate and sharp, the vertical of nose combines with the neat horizontal of the mouth to anchor the features. The skin is smooth and contrasts with the tidy vertical incisions that define the hair and the regular rows of bulging spheres that are the diadem's pearls. Calculated irregularities inform the larger composition. Thus the almost imperceptible turn of the neck and head to the right leads to the slightly fuller face on one side. Likewise there are slight irregularities in the thickness of the individual strands of hair, and the diadem's central jewel sits slightly, almost imperceptibly, off of the central axis.

The effect of these choices is two-fold. On the one hand Arcadius is recognizable as a member of the Theodosian household. With his oval face, sharp nose and small, thin-lipped mouth, he shares the same general physiognomy as his brother Honorius (384–423) and his father Theodosius I (347–395). On the other hand, the overt use of stable geometric forms, regular contours, sharp lines, and smooth surfaces creates a fully idealized image. At the same time the slight asymmetries and irregularities infuse the image with a sense of subdued motion and through it, life. In essence what the artist has created is an image of the “calm countenance” (ore *sereno*) described by Ammianus Marcellinus (16.10.5) as appropriate to the imperial person.

Different, albeit related, criteria shape the features of another late 4th- or early 5th-century portrait, that of Istanbul Archaeological Museum 5278 (Fig. 5.4), a male head from the Fatih district (Fıratlı 1990, 14). The unknown sitter, a man of indeterminate age, looks straight forward. Narrow, almond-shaped eyes with lightly sketched eyebrows and high cheekbones characterize his features. His skin is generally smooth, save for two horizontal creases in the brow. He sports a curling moustache and beard together with a head of thick, neatly combed hair.

As in the portrait of Arcadius, the restrained pose, serene gaze, and unblemished skin establish the patrician credentials of the subject; however, the portrait is otherwise different.

Neither the geometric structures nor the deliberate play of horizontal and vertical seen in the Arcadius portrait appear in this image. In fact characterization of shape and structure are difficult to make as the likeness eschews the regularization of features. Nor are there any of the overt, unifying reiterations of forms seen in the

imperial portrait. Instead individual features, although perfectly well proportioned and unified with respect to both one another and the face as a whole, are distinctly articulated. Further the textures of hair and beard contrast both with each other and with the smooth texture of the skin. This variation in surface and texture breaks up the sculptured surface and create a set of nesting, irregular profiles, one framing the face where the smooth flesh gives way gradually to beard, the other outlining the outer shape of the head as a whole. The comparative irregularity of these forms makes a striking contrast to the elegantly controlled shapes of the Arcadius portrait and serves to underscore the lower status of the subject.

As telling as style in the interpretation of the subject is the question of medium. As both the material and written records indicate, Constantinopolitan honorific sculpture deployed a wide range of materials: marble, silvered and gilded bronze, porphyry, and alabaster. Nothing like this variety is seen in other centres where the bulk of honorific sculpture was in marble, a fact that suggests that both the choice and the range of media were related to the imperial context.

What was it about these materials that made them suitable to a Constantinopolitan venue? To a certain degree colour symbolism was at play, as in the case of porphyry, where purple signified the imperial (Delbrueck 1933; Reinhold 1976; Gage 1993, 16–27; Bradley 2009, 189–211 especially 206–8). But this type of direct association, while legitimate, is also strikingly one-dimensional, and as such it may have been but one part of a larger package that also set great store by the actual, physical nature of the materials used and the associations they conjured. Specifically, it is possible that the choice of material was determined as much by its ability to embody the imperial essence through its physical properties as by colour symbolism alone.

Let us return to the example of porphyry to consider this claim. As the name suggests, colour was the defining aspect of porphyry as a material. But what associations did that colour conjure, and what did they imply in the context of the stone? In the *Natural History* Pliny sets the course with his remarks on purple murex dye. He describes purple as “gleaming [sublucens] with a dark rose colour,” (9.60.126; trans. Rackham 1938, 249) and then continues noting:

“The rods and axes of Rome clear it a path and it also marks the honourable estate of boyhood; it distinguishes the senate from the knighthood; it is called in to secure the favour of the gods. It adds radiance to [inluminat] every garment, while in a triumphal robe it is blended with gold” (9.60.127; trans. Rackham 1938, 249).

What is arresting about Pliny’s discussion is not so much the

association of purple with the senatorial class, an idea which is altogether familiar, but rather the vocabulary used to describe the color: purple (*purpura*), gleams (*sublucens*), and brightens (*inluminat*). Thus, he continues: “Its highest glory consists in the colour of congealed blood, blackish at first glance, but gleaming when held up to the light” (9.62.135; trans. Rackham 1938, 255). Later writers both confirm and elaborate upon this response. For example, Philostratus the Elder: “... for though it seems to be dark it gains a peculiar beauty from the sun and is infused with the brilliance of the sun’s warmth.” (*Imagines* 1.28; trans. Fairbanks 1931, 111)

If, as these authors describe, porphyry the colour was seen as both dark and luminous, then I would suggest that it is not only useful to understand porphyry the stone in the same manner but also to apply that understanding to the experience of imperial porphyry portraits of the type seen in Constantinople. How this understanding is applied depends of course upon the associations with luminosity and the light that fires it. Throughout antiquity that association was with the divine, as suggested by the rayed crown characteristic of the iconography of Apollo or the remarks of Plotinus on the “One, who irradiates forever, abiding unchanged over the intelligible” (*Ennead* 5.3.12, trans. Armstrong 1984, 117). That this radiance was also a late antique imperial property is clear from panegyrical texts. Consider, for example, the words proclaimed by the Panegyrist of 291 at the arrival of the Diocletian and Maximian in Milan that same year:

“Now however, when from each summit of the Alps your deity first shone forth, a clearer light spread over all Italy; wonder seized upon all who gazed up no less than uncertainty, whether some god was arising from those mountain crests, or by these steps descending to earth from heaven” (Nixon and Rodgers 1994, 95, 538).

As the encomium makes clear, the signal attribute of these emperors was the radiance generated by their divinity. The inscription associated with the gilded bronze statue of Constantine in his eponymous forum, “To Constantine who shines as the equal of the sun,” (Hesychios 41; Leo Grammaticus 87) suggests that such qualities remained crucial to the recognition of and understanding of the imperial person throughout the later Roman period. Thus, while panegyrists used words to evoke a vision of the imperial luminous, sculptors used medium, and in so doing they created an image that was nothing short of an imperial epiphany. In the case of porphyry, material evoked a package of associations that was much richer than the simple one-on-one equation between purple and *imperium*. Purple and hence porphyry were appropriate to the subject precisely because

they possessed in their physical makeup the physical properties that were analogues to the essence of imperial sanctity, radiance and luminosity.

This complexity must also have been a feature of other media. Although varied, the materials chosen for sculptured display in Constantinople have several things in common: their rarity, their corresponding preciousness, their difficulty of manipulation, and, above all, their potential for shine. Bronze was not only costly, but also among the most difficult of mastery. Silvering or gilding further adorned it, not only making it more precious, but also contributing to its lustre. This radiance, achieved by the pulsing reddish dazzle of gold or the cool white of silver, was again a visual corollary of the divine that conveyed something of the imperial essence.

Alabaster, which appears to be unique to Constantinople as a medium for late antique honorific sculpture, may have evoked similar associations. Apart from its rarity, the translucent crystalline structures irregularly embedded within it reflect and refract light in a complex and varied manner evocative of imperial radiance (Plate 15). Indeed, given the strong associations between imperium and light, this lustre suggests that the Constantinopolitan alabaster fragments, the *chlamydati* from the Sultan Ahmet district and the other, togate statue, should be understood as the remains of imperial statues.

Whether of gleaming metal or shining stone, the Constantinopolitan honorific portraits, monuments such as the porphyry *chlamydati*, the gilded bronze figure of Marcian or the alabaster *togatus*, conveyed through their rareness, their intractability, and their shine the magnificence of the imperial person. It was this lustre above all that expressed the imperial essence, transforming the standard sculptured genres by infusing them with such bona fide imperial qualities as magnificence, radiance, and splendour.

The range and combination of media may also have been important in conveying these qualities, as suggested by the example of a statue of the empress Eudoxia in the Augusteion. Although the statue has long since disappeared, the surviving inscription reports that the portrait, which was silver, or as is more likely silvered bronze, stood on a porphyry column (*CIL* III, 736 and *Corpus Inscriptionum Graecarum* IV, 8614; Socrates Scholasticus 6, 18; Sozomen 8.20, Marcellinus Comes III, p. 8). Given that silver and porphyry shared similar qualities, the juxtaposition of the two media may have expressed the different aspects of those qualities by contrasting the deep lustre of porphyry to the bright shine of silver and in so doing expressing the manifold glories of the imperial person.

Presentation may further have enhanced this sense. Stylite images could not have been easy to see in any detailed manner. In profile

against the sky individual features would have been obliterated, leaving the gleam of the materials to work their visual magic.

At ground level different display strategies appear to have been used. Whether heads or torsos the majority of the surviving sculptured fragments are worked only on the front. This practice indicates the desire to establish and control a single, frontal point of view. Further, the truly cursory treatment of selected figures' backs suggests placement against, or, as is more likely within, an architectural context.

Two late antique bases, one recovered during excavation for the Palace of Justice in Sultan Ahmet (Istanbul Archaeological Museum, inv. 5559) the other from Divan Yolu (Istanbul Archaeological Museum, inv. 4202) (Fıratlı 1990, 35, pl. 26, figs. 66–67) lend support to this idea: carved on three sides, with its fourth left rough, it suggests the placement of statue and base against a wall. Surviving statues complement and confirm this evidence. The heads of Theodosius I and Arcadius are similarly rough on the back, as are the torsos of the freestanding *chalmidati* and *togati* with the exception of number 4051. In addition whether alabaster or marble, the depth of most of the pieces is shallow (Fig. 5.10), making it evident that the sculpture generally was intended to be seen not as free standing sculpture in the round, but against or within an architectural setting. Such venues, now lost, would have included not only the colonnaded porticoes of the Mese, but also *aediculae* and niches characteristic of such structures as the Chalke Gate, the Milion or any one of a number of *nymphaea*.

Such controlled visual access would have worked hand in glove with the formal qualities of the sculpture. As the working of the surviving torso fragments indicates the city's honorific dedications were intended to be seen from the front, and this preference for directed, single-axis display is underscored by the manipulation of the pose. Consider the example of the Laleli alabaster *togatus*, number 769 (Plate 14). The figure, which wears the long-sleeved double layered tunic and short, tightly wrapped toga that was the sartorial equivalent of a dark suit for high ranking late antique officials, stands facing forward its left leg straight and right leg bent back at the knee. The left arm bends at the elbow and the lower arm, which was attached separately and is now missing, would have projected towards the viewer. The head, feet, and right arm also are missing.

This damage notwithstanding the statue shows a clear and controlled use of *contrapposto*. The left shoulder is raised and pulled slightly back, its position emphasized by the swath of drapery pulled tightly across it, its folds spreading out in a fan-like arc across the torso from underneath the right arm. The right shoulder sits lower and

slightly forward, its more relaxed position highlighted by the looser drapery. Vertical pleats fall unbroken from the shoulder to the even hem of the tunic on the left side, while a series of ever widening u-shaped folds echoes the position of the bent leg on the right. The toga itself falls straight from the right shoulder to beneath the knee where it is pulled up and over the projecting left arm. The whole figure is contained within its profile, while the strong play of vertical and horizontal in the limbs and the drapery anchors the figure against the subtle sense of movement created by the use of *contrapposto* to confirm the frontal pose. Similar treatment characterizes the other surviving figures.

This preference for controlled movement within a distinctly frontal pose was by no means an absolute feature of late antique sculptured production as comparison with contemporary magistrate portraits from Aphrodisias, Istanbul Archaeological Museum, inv. 2265 and 2266, suggests (Firatlı 1990, 10–11). In the Aphrodisias sculpture the figures appear to step forward and turn, their drapery fanning out in wide three-dimensionally sculptured folds. This different conception of the overall composition may reflect the imperial context of the Constantinopolitan display. The emphasis on frontality and the comparative stillness of the figures generated by the tightly controlled use of *contrapposto* may represent a sculptured corollary of imperial presentation in line with Ammianus Marcellinus' (16.10.9–11) famous description of the emperor Constantius's rigid and unbending demeanor on the occasion of his entry into Rome. Designed to underscore the emperor's majesty such contained presentation may have been recreated in the sculptured compositions of emperors and in turn would have been well served by the display of images in a controlled architectural context.

Important as it must have been, imperial glorification was but one aspect of the Constantinopolitan honorific agenda. The other element that the sculpture addressed, and one closely linked to the question of imperial glorification, was the issue of Constantinopolitan history. All ancient cities with any claims to urban pre-eminence possessed and proclaimed a foundation myth the details of which often were articulated in sculptured displays. This was the case in cities such as Ephesos and Miletos and at Constantinople itself. Here installations of some of the ancient world's most well-known sculpture, monuments of pre-4th-century manufacture that had been culled from the cities and sanctuaries of the Roman world, were erected in the great public spaces of the newly established capital according to a Constantinian mandate. These monuments, which were displayed in such venues as the Augusteion, the Hippodrome, and the Forum of Constantine, linked Constantinopolitan origins to Rome and Troy before it. In so

doing, these gatherings established the city's historic credentials. In the urban scheme of things these links to a heroic past guaranteed an almost unrivalled status derived from the sense of age itself. Origins such as these were synonymous with honour and eternal glory, and this sense of honour and glory was conveyed not only through the subject matter of the sculpture displayed, but also by means of its style (Bassett 2004, 50–78).



Fig. 5.10. Magistrate from Aphrodisias, Istanbul Archaeological Museum, inv. 2266, photo: S. E. Bassett.

Overwhelmingly the choice of material for the capital, whether as

original works of Greek art or Roman copies or elaborations of those original models, demonstrated a preference for works of classical or late classical manufacture, as evidenced by the inclusion of such famous pieces as the *Doryphorus* by Polycleitus or the *Sandalbinder* by Lysippus in the displays at the Baths of Zeuxippos (Bassett 2004, 51–58).

If the great Constantinopolitan collections of antiquities established the city as honourable and eternal by articulating links to the heroic past through subject matter and style, I would like to suggest that the new installations of honorific sculpture articulated new, if related, values for the present in the same manner. Like the display of antiquities around themes appropriate to the ideas of Rome and Troy, the massing of honorific portrait installations was an exercise in the documentation of an urban history. According to this history emperors and their associates took up the mantle initially assigned to the figures of the city's foundation legend, assimilating typologically their mythic status and heroic roles.

This dialogue between past and present was not unlike the typological display of imperial virtues set up on the Arch of Constantine, and as in the Roman monument the manipulation of style underscored and enhanced certain relationships. Thus the Constantinopolitan emperors and their cohort stood out against the city's antique sculpture by virtue of their style, a style that together with medium expressed the splendour, magnificence, and radiance of the first citizens of the later Roman world.

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COLLECTIONS, CANONS, AND CONTEXT: THE AFTERLIFE OF GREEK MASTERPIECES IN LATE ANTIQUITY

Lea Stirling

In any city of the Roman Empire, inhabitants were surrounded by statuary as they visited theatres, baths, fountains, sanctuaries, and other public spaces. This “collectivity” of statues, as P. Stewart (2003, 7) has called it, was part of the expected armature of the Roman city, and comprised portraits of emperors and local notables, as well as ideal statuary, that is, statues of divinities and mythological figures. No less adorned with statuary were the public show spaces within wealthy houses and villas. The collectivity of statues expressed the prestige, history, and cultural history of a city.

The ancient viewer would easily have recognized, as later art historians have too, that among the ideal statues, there was frequent repetition of the same types, or of generally similar formulae for designing individual gods. Some statues such as the so-called “Aspasia” (Guerrini 1974) were very close indeed in their design and clearly envisaged a particular, common result. Others used variations on a recognizable common form, such as the weary Hercules leaning in exhaustion on his club, a format attributed to the sculptor Lysippos and most famously exemplified by the Farnese Hercules found in the Baths of Caracalla (Palagia 1988, 762–63 and 764, no. 702, pl. 493; Stewart 1990, 190; Moreno 1982). Still others used a range of components from a common pool of similar and appropriate elements. Thus, there are many ancient statues of hunting Artemis in fluttering garments or of a languid Dionysos pouring out wine to assorted companions.¹ Representations of these divinities in similar configurations appeared in other media, such as coins, lamps, or sarcophagi (all four statue types discussed above appear in Figure 6.1).

A variety of questions concerning imitations and originals have arisen in scholarship on Roman ideal statuary over time (for historiography on these issues, see Ridgway 1984; Perry 2005). Much initial scholarship on these artworks concentrated on identifying famous Greek artworks of Classical or Hellenistic times as the originals behind these statues. Using methodology developed in the study of manuscripts, scholars attempted to reconstruct and study the Greek originals using the evidence of the Roman copies. An underlying assumption was that the primary value of these statues for the Romans was they imitated unattainable famous originals by known artists. Subsequent scholarship has questioned many of the presuppositions in the approaches of *Kopienkritik*: that all Roman ideal statues imitated a specific Greek original, that Roman purchasers valued ideal statues only for their connection to famous masters, that art of the Classical period was more valued than that of the Hellenistic period, that Romans lacked the originality to design statues themselves. Thus, certain statue types have been re-identified as Roman creations.² Context has come to the fore; certain subjects were appropriate to particular settings (such as baths or gardens), and statues could be combined in programs that expressed a meaning that was greater than the sum of its parts (Manderscheid 1981; Marvin 1983; Gazda 1991). Study of the practice and vocabulary of emulation in literature and rhetoric further assists in attempting to reconstruct the world-view of the patrons of Roman ideal art (Gazda 2002; Perry 2005).

These, then, have been the issues and approaches in studying ideal statues in the Roman world from Republican times through the high empire. What of the late empire? It is clear from both textual references and archaeological evidence that classicizing statuary remained present in many public and domestic spaces. Some of these statues were heirlooms; others were contemporary pieces, products of workshops in Aphrodisias and elsewhere (Hannestad 1994; Bergmann 1999; Katakis 2012). To what extent did viewers value artistic pedigree, style, “originality,” and other factors in assessing statues?

We may distil a series of questions, then consider what textual and archaeological evidence offers us for interpreting them. What statues (if any) did late antique artists copy, and what types did late antique patrons choose when displaying heirloom statues? Did they want artworks associated with the Greek masters? Did late antique patrons have a concept of originals and copies? What was their visual exposure to famous Greek artworks? As we shall see, different forms of evidence provide conflicting impressions. Educated late antique writers referred to famous artists as icons of brilliance, and wrote epigrams about renowned artworks. Public displays formed in the 4th century in Constantinople did prioritize specific original artworks,

though most of these gained their significance through association with places or historical events rather than with particular famous artists. The majority of the surviving archaeological record, however, from both villas and baths, reflects interest in particular subject matter more than preoccupation with named artists or styles strictly reflecting the classical era. We look in turn at these three forms of evidence.

Greek masters and Greek originals in textual sources: a canon of references

Let us first consider what late antique authors wrote about masterpieces, famous artists, and statuary more generally. The 4th-century elite, east and west, was unquestionably aware of a number of famous artists and artworks, as we see through epigrams, literary conceits and offhand remarks or flattering comparisons. However, it swiftly becomes clear that these references mainly concentrate on a fairly narrow canon of names and works that had become symbols of quality or fame, described always in conventional sentiments. The Constantinopolitan orator Themistius evokes ancient masterpieces while rebutting criticisms of his acceptance of the urban prefecture (held 383–84; *Or.* 34):

“In no other art do we look for the number of works produced. What we look for are beauty and precision of craftsmanship. I admire Phidias for his Pisaeon [Olympian] Zeus, Polygnotos for his hall [at Delphi], and Myron for one heifer. How many more works Pauson produced than Zeuxis or Apelles! But who does not prefer one painting of Zeuxis or Apelles over the whole oeuvre of Pauson?” (*Or.* 34. 11, trans. Penella 2000, 218).

Writing around the same time (sometime after 370) in the city of Rome, the aristocrat Symmachus enumerates a very similar list of works when describing the superior sensibilities of his protégé Barachus, who had a greater understanding than the common crowd of works such as “the Olympian Jove of Phidias, the heifer of Myron, and the *canephora* (basket-carrier) of Polycleitus” (*Ep.* 1.29). The overlap in these two seemingly offhand lists of great artists is striking, and further investigation of such references, as T. Pekáry (2007) has done, shows that the canon of artists in late antique references was indeed quite narrow. Phidias was the symbol *par excellence* of artistic brilliance and perfection, as T. Pekáry (2007, 64–65) shows through the frequency of citations. The pool of sampled works is not extensive,

but the trends seem clear. The sculptor Praxiteles, the painter Zeuxis, and some others also appear fairly frequently, though the range is vastly diminished from the artists discussed by Pliny the Elder. Of Phidias' works, the colossal chryselephantine statue of Zeus at Olympia was the runaway favourite masterpiece, though many who praised it had not been to Olympia to see it. From the early 5th century until a fire in 475, this statue was evidently in Constantinople where it formed part of the public collection of Lausus (see below). However, the availability of the actual statue in Constantinople for more than a century and a half did not create any recognizable references or observations based on autopsy. The 11th-century writer Kedrenos is the first extant source to mention that the Olympian Zeus was in Constantinople, though C. Mango argues that this text ultimately derived from the *History* of one Malchus, who lived in the second half of the 5th century (Mango *et al.* 1992, 89–92). Malchus' *History*, now lost, appears to have included an account of the fire of 475, an event that occurred during his lifetime. Overall then, although individual passages in late antique writings sound fairly knowledgeable, when they are viewed together, it becomes clear that the sentiments are quite formulaic.³ Nonetheless, it is significant that a canon of expected names and artworks did exist, however superficial it may seem.

In literature too, there was a core of favorite *topoi* concerning artworks and artists, many of these subjects stretching back to Hellenistic times. For instance, there are numerous late antique epigrams on statuary in the *Greek Anthology*, several in the late 4th-century Latin *Epigrammata Bobiensia*, and more in the works of the later 4th-century Ausonius, a Gallic rhetor. Somewhat surprisingly, the bronze heifer of Myron, an artist of the 5th century BC, was the ancient artwork most often written about by epigrammists, with forty-seven examples in Latin and Greek (combined) (Kay 2001, 93; Overbeck 1959, 103–8, nos. 550–97) lists ancient references). Ausonius wrote eight epigrams on this subject, as well as one on the Knidian Aphrodite of Praxiteles and one on Occasio (Opportunity, the Greek Kairos, a work by Lysippos).⁴ The poems exploit familiar conceits about the verisimilitude and iconography of the statues.

How did late antique authors become acquainted with these conventional sentiments? One of the most important avenues of exposure was references to ancient art and artists embedded in rhetorical handbooks (Pekáry 1989; 2007, 63). These treatises made use of analogies to artwork in describing particular techniques; thus advanced students would encounter instruction on interpreting artworks in this genre. Quintilian, for instance, evokes Myron's Discoboulos in discussing how poses and usages should be suited to

the occasion (2.13.10), Praxiteles when evaluating the relative influence of nature and education (2.19.3), and the painters Timanthus and Apelles to demonstrate the power of figures of speech (2.13.11–14). Quintilian's treatises remained in use in Late Antiquity.⁵ Rhetorical training, as a rite of passage for the upper classes, must have been the single most important influence in creating a canon of artists and works that late antique writers evoked.

Other earlier writings that discussed artwork remained in circulation. The *Natural History* of Pliny, presumably including the chapters on ancient art, was still read. Symmachus (Ep. 1.24) loaned some unspecified volumes of this work to Ausonius (for further late antique references to this work, see Bassett 2004, 103–5). A. Cameron (1993, 80–84, 90–92) argues that a collection of Greek epigrams, a precursor to the collection that became the Greek Anthology, was circulating in Italy and Gaul in the late 4th century. This putative manuscript probably provided the direct inspiration for some of the epigrams of Ausonius and the authors preserved in the *Epigrammata Bobiensia*, including the epigrams on the heifer of Myron. Thus, literature provided many opportunities for intellectual encounter with ancient artists and artworks.

Furthermore, those who visited or lived in Rome may well have seen original Greek artworks still on display in some public spaces. Textual sources make it clear that Greek masterworks were moved to Rome as booty during the late Republic and were displayed in temples, fora, and other public buildings (Ridgway 1984, 16–18). Many presumably remained on display in Late Antiquity. 4th-century statue bases claiming to carry works by Phidias, Praxiteles, Polycleitus, Bryaxis, and Timarchus were found near the Basilica Julia in the Roman forum (*CIL* 6.10038–10042; Machado 2006, 181–85; Coates-Stephens 2007, 181). It appears that the statues had been moved to the forum from another location.⁶ As late as the mid-6th century, the historian Procopius visited Rome with Justinian's armies and mentions seeing the heifer of Myron and unspecified works that he attributed to Phidias and Lysippos in the Forum of Peace (*Wars* 7.21.11–14). One statue carried an inscription naming Phidias as the sculptor. This brings to mind the bases found in the Forum Romanum. The forum was evidently rather run-down by this time since cattle were being herded through it. Trying to reconcile Procopius' different remarks and the archaeological evidence, M. Ghilardi (2006, 138, 147–48) argues that the dilapidated forum itself was largely in use as a marketplace, but had a fountain where statuary could still have been on display.

The Athenian sophists and those who studied in Athens had access to original artwork by name-brand artists on the Akropolis, most

notably of course, Phidias. Perhaps this contact helped reinforce Phidias as the most frequently mentioned artist, though authors mention the Olympian Zeus much more than the Athena Parthenos. The 4th-century *Expositio totius mundi et gentium* (52) refers to the many ancient statues in Athens as one of the city's attractions.

Let us further consider, where possible, whether the "original" of some of the artworks mentioned in the poems discussed above were still visible in Late Antiquity, and whether copies of them were used or made in that era. I stress that this is a sampling, not a comprehensive survey, though a fuller investigation could be interesting, as it emerges that some of the statues mentioned in the epigrams were still visible.

All three of the statues Ausonius wrote about (the heifer of Myron, the Knidia of Praxiteles, and the Kairos/Occasio) are specifically attested in Rome and Constantinople in Late Antiquity, although Ausonius did not visit these cities. As we have seen, the heifer of Myron appears to have been displayed in Rome in the Forum of Peace; evidently it originally stood in Athens (Cicero, *In Verrem* 2.4.60). Nonetheless, its fame seems to arise mainly from the epigrammatic tradition going back to Hellenistic times. Interestingly, even Pliny's awareness of these piece stems at least in part from famous poetry (*celebratis versibus*; *HN* 34.57). This sculpture does not appear to have been widely replicated or adapted in Roman times.⁷ Another work by Myron, the Discoboulos, which was described in somewhat more detail (Lucian, *Philopseudes* 18) and can be recognized in numerous copies even by the most sceptical (Perry 2005, 91), nonetheless did not inspire poetry. Its ancient location is not even known (Stewart 1990, 149).

The Knidia and the Kairos wound up on public display with the Zeus from Olympia in the collection of Lausos in Constantinople by the early 5th century (Bassett 2004, 101–10, 233 no. 151, 237–8, no. 156). It is true that this collection postdates Ausonius, who never travelled to the Eastern empire anyhow, but these statues must have been available somewhere prior to being "collected" by Lausos.⁸ The Knidia inspired myriad statuary versions as well as depictions on coins, lamps, and the like and thus must have been highly recognizable as a general type (Seaman 2004). Some of these likely remained in circulation in Late Antiquity. For instance, a pilaster capital from Aphrodisias showing the Knidia dates to the 3rd or early 4th century (Dillon 1997, 735). A version of the Knidia in the Baths of Caracalla at Rome was probably still on view, as the baths remained in use into the early 6th century (Marvin 1983, 348). The Porta Marina Baths at Ostia, which were continuously repaired up to the early 6th century, possessed another Knidia (Valeri 1998, 25–26; see

also Boin 2010, 263). Thus, late antique writers did have the opportunity to see and identify renderings of this statuary type.

Notwithstanding the availability of at least some original ancient statuary in sanctuaries and public places, we have seen that late antique writers mostly made use of a fairly restricted canon of famous artists and artworks that symbolized virtuosity. Some of these statue types perhaps became familiar through copies, adaptations, or depictions in other media, but for the most part, information about the canon of artists and works was transmitted through writing and speeches. Rhetorical treatises and techniques that used artists and artworks to convey ideas probably constituted the most important vehicle of transmission. Although intermittent references to Greek artists continued into Byzantine times, the frequency of references and the canon of artists narrowed continuously (Pekáry 2007, 57–58, citing Nicephorus and Photius).

However, this seemingly rather artificial literary appreciation of famous Greek artworks does not tell the whole story of late antique valuation of ancient statuary, as we shall see from further consideration of statuary display in Constantinople and in villas.

Original statues in late antique Constantinople

As we have just seen, some late antique inscribed statue bases in Rome advertised works by famous Greek artists, and several apparently original statues from Classical Antiquity remained on public display in Constantinople in the collection of Lausos. In fact, several public collections assembled in Constantinople over the course of the 4th century included specific original statues. S. Bassett has traced the evolving meaning of ancient statuary over the 1st century of Constantinople's existence as an imperial capital (Bassett 2004; see also Mango 1963; Corso 2001). However, though these statues were evidently valued as “originals,” that value stemmed, in most instances, more from their history or location than from their association with famous Greek artists.

The city of Constantinople was boosted to unexpected prominence on the world stage when Constantine re-founded it as the new capital of the Roman Empire in 324. Two patristic writers, Eusebius and Jerome, record with some unease that statuary expropriated from cities and sanctuaries around the empire decorated the new capital (Eusebius, VC 3.54.1; Jerome, *Chronicon* 314.24). This must reflect the expectation that a great city should have a correspondingly great collectivity of statuary. Eusebius, who visited the capital and was a contemporary of Constantine, calls these “brazen statues of the most

exquisite workmanship” and insists that “the emperor held up these very playthings to be the ridicule and the sport of all beholders” (VC 3.54.1–3; Mango 1963, 57). As he enumerates certain examples, Eusebius emphasizes the subject and provenance of the pieces rather than their specific authorship. Nonetheless, we may wonder if some of these bronze statues were Greek originals. We will look at aspects of the great statuary displays in the Hippodrome, the Lausus collection, and the Baths of Zeuxippos.

Among the buildings initiated in the Constantinian building program was the Hippodrome (Bassett 2004, 58–71, 85–89). The dividing wall or spina in the centre of the Hippodrome accreted artistic decoration from the time of Constantine on. A handful of these artworks survive, and the rest are known through textual references. A bronze statue of a seated Hercules in the Hippodrome is attributed by Byzantine sources to “Lysimachus” and is said to have been brought with great difficulty from Rome late in the reign of Constantine. Modern scholars suggest that this was actually a Hercules by Lysippos that Rome had taken as spoils from Tarentum in 208 BC (Bassett 2004, 73, 152–54).⁹ S. Bassett (2004, 154) argues that this work was significant because, as booty, it was a reminder of Roman victory.

There were other original artworks in the Hippodrome, including a statue of a donkey from the victory monument at Nikopolis celebrating the battle of Actium in 31 BC, tripods from the sanctuary of Apollo at Delphi, and the serpent column celebrating the Greek victory over the Persians at Plataea in 479 BC. All the monuments just named (admittedly, some of them not exactly statues) were indeed valued as “original” artworks. Their significance, however, came from their association with a particular place or event, rather than an association with a particular Greek master. The emperor Theodosius erected an obelisk of Thutmose III from Heliopolis in Egypt at the centre of the spina and constructed a matching obelisk from ashlar blocks at the southeast end. Successfully transporting and erecting such a large monument showed technical mastery and evoked the Ur-racetrack of the Roman world, the Circus Maximus at Rome, which was the only other circus with two obelisks. Augustus and Constantine had each contributed an Egyptian obelisk to the Circus Maximus. S. Bassett (2004, 73, 62–66) argues that the overall message of the spolia in the Hippodrome was to emphasize that the city of Constantinople had inherited the victorious legacy of Rome. Themes of victory, suitable both to the city and to a location for chariot racing, further resounded through the reuse of original victory monuments such as the serpent column from Plataea.

Moving ahead to the early 5th century, another significant public assemblage of statuary in late antique Constantinople was the

collection of Lausos, who held the office of *praepositus sacri cubiculi* under Theodosius II. This assemblage did emphasize works of famous artists. Nothing survives of the collection, which perished in a fire in 475 and is known to us solely through descriptions preserved in much later (11th- and 12th-century) chronicles by Kedrenos and Zonaras. According to these descriptions, the collection of Lausos displayed several famous original statues by famous artists, along with assorted animals and mythological creatures. Most prominent of the Greek masterpieces were the colossal chryselephantine cult statue of Zeus from Olympia, a work of Phidias and the Knidian Aphrodite of Praxiteles. Other works attributed to specific Greek masters include an Athena from Lindos on Rhodes (Skylis and Dipoinos), a Hera of Samos (Bupalos), and a statue of Kairos (Lysippos). A statue of Eros stringing a bow is not attributed to an artist, but modern scholars suggest it was also a work of Lysippos.¹⁰

Were these statues really Greek originals in the sense that modern scholars understand that term? Legislation against sacrifice and cult statues in the late 4th century would have made cult statues and other sculptural ornamentation of temples available, and other legislation makes it clear that such artworks belonged to the emperor. The high-ranking Lausos may well have gained access to these decommissioned or confiscated items. Kedrenos specifically calls the Zeus an ivory statue, though this detail could have crept in through awareness of details of the statue at Olympia, as transmitted through the rhetorical tradition. The Knidia was a popular type (as we have seen) and was also well known through textual sources, so here the author may be identifying the statue type rather than the original in the modern sense. At the present remove, it is no longer possible to judge whether these statues were original in the modern sense, though contemporary viewers clearly thought so.

The description by Kedrenos makes it clear that the artistic attribution was important to the viewer. Perhaps the statues were labelled with the subject and origin (labelled statue bases were found elsewhere in Constantinople; see below). Inhabitants of early 5th-century Constantinople were meant to know that their city housed some of the most famous artworks and cult statues of pagan antiquity. Bassett suggests that viewers could admire their artistry and pedigree and at the same time at the same time comprehend the falseness of a religion whose divinities were so patently man-made. In a sense, these statues also fit into the centuries-old tradition of publicly displaying artwork captured from a fallen enemy as booty. In this case, the fallen enemy was pagan religion. The original statues in this collection were selected not only for their association with famous masters, but also for their personal history as functioning cult statues.

Other original artworks on display in Constantinople drew their significance from their original location and allegorical potential. Statues taken from the sanctuary of Zeus at Dodona and another Athena from Lindos stood in front of the Senate house during the later 4th century, while inside the Senate house were nine bronze statues of the Muses brought from Mount Helicon by Constantine.¹¹ Thus, the Zeus and Athena vividly demonstrated the emperor's control over the pagan sanctuaries and their artworks. They also symbolized justice and wisdom. The Muses reflected an ideal of intellectual cultivation and balance to which senators should aspire. The orator Themistius specifically refers to the statues in speeches delivered in the senate (Or. 17.308, 18.324, 31.192).

A final Constantinopolitan sculptural collection in the Baths of Zeuxippos demonstrates different motives in the selection of statuary from the other collections we have examined thus far. In the early 4th century, the emperor Constantine lavishly renovated this bath building and decorated it with statuary.¹² Towards the end of the 5th century, the poet Christodoros of Koptos wrote an ekphrasis of the baths, giving us an idea of the statuary that stood in them. Many of the statues were bronze. Christodoros focuses on iconography and the emotive value of the pieces and does not attribute any of the statues to specific sculptors.¹³ Interestingly, two statue bases naming Aischines and Hecuba excavated in this area do correspond to pieces mentioned in the poem, allowing some general confidence in the identifications. Inscribed labels on at least some of the bases would have helped viewers identify some of the more unusual subjects. Statuary in these baths included Apollo, Aphrodite, Herakles, and numerous figures or groups linked to the Trojan myths. For the most part, these divinities and mythological subjects generally were traditional in bathing decor and fit in with the major themes in Roman baths, including health, watery themes, and the Bacchic retinue.¹⁴ Emphasis on the Trojan cycle could remind bathers that Rome was the heir to Troy, and Constantinople the heir to Rome. In this collection, then, we see an interest in appropriate subject matter rather than artistic pedigree.

Because the Constantinopolitan collections described above were created with considerable effort in the 4th and 5th centuries, they represent a clear snapshot of contemporary outlooks to ancient art. Original Greek statuary played a role in the décor of this newly created capital, as booty and as a demonstration that this new city inherited the Greco-Roman cultural legacy. The importance of most of the originals lay in their historical significance or geographical origins, though, to be sure, the Lausos collection included certain very famous masterpieces. In the Baths of Zeuxippos, statues were chosen

for their subject matter. While one could argue that other late antique cities had to interpret and adjust an existing sculptural landscape, in Constantinople we have the opportunity to see clearly what elements were particularly valued. It is important to note that Theodosian projects of the late 4th century also encompassed reused Classical statuary, for instance in the Theodosian forum and the Golden Gate, and in the refurbishments to the Hippodrome and the Senate house. Statuary remained an important element of urban display.

Thematic statuary in late antique baths

As we have seen, Christodoros' poetic account of the statuary in the Baths of Zeuxippos emphasizes subject matter over artistic pedigree, and the range of subjects in this bath accorded with the traditional themes emphasized in baths in the Roman period. Excavated material from late antique baths likewise suggests that statuary décor continued to include ideal statuary related to traditional themes (Stirling 2012). Many baths did have renovations in the 4th century, attested through inscriptions or stratigraphy. Some inscriptions specify that statues were part of the refurbished décor, such as one from Membressa stating that the donor provided "decoration and statues suitable for a bath" (*statuas ornatum piscinales*; CIL 8.25837).¹⁵ Four statue bases at the West Baths of Charchell (one of the most richly decorated bathing establishments in the empire) carry late inscriptions recording that the statues on them had been "removed from unsavory places" (*translata ex sordentibus locis*) (CIL 8.20963, 8.20965, 8.21078, 8.21079; see Lepelley 1994, 10–11; Witschel 2007, 122–24). Two bases specified the statues involved, a Juno Regina and a Hercules, but these are not linked to specific finds at the baths. Although it is clear in a general sense that there were ideal statues and portraits in late antique baths, it can be difficult to distinguish a specifically late antique configuration from excavation reports.¹⁶

The long-lived Hadrianic baths at Aphrodisias provide an unparalleled opportunity to examine the evolution of statuary decoration in a bath over time.¹⁷ During the high empire, the baths displayed honorific and ideal statuary, including an impressive set of some twenty over life-sized caryatids dedicated by individual women. During the 4th through 6th centuries, the Hadrianic baths became the most popular location in the city for dedicating honorific statuary. The focus of the honorific statues shifted over this period, emphasizing mainly emperors in the 4th century, provincial governors in the 5th century, and local benefactors in the 6th century.¹⁸ Ideal sculptures were moved into the Hadrianic baths from other locations, which R.

R. R. Smith (2007, 215) suggests may have been sanctuaries or other “unsavory locations” as mentioned in certain western inscriptions (see above). For instance, two statues originally dedicated to Aphrodite may originally have stood in the temple of Aphrodite. Three statue groups depicting Trojan themes were set up in the pool of a tetrastyle court. Their content resonated with Trojan elements in the foundation myths of the city. The accreted statuary assemblage at the Hadrianic baths reflects the primacy of content and context over copies of *nobilis opera*.

Another site where it is possible to distinguish discarded and reused sculpture during the building’s final phase is the gymnasium and baths at Salamis on Crete (Karageorghis and Vermeule 1964, 2–5). Equipped with statuary in the early 2nd century, the building was destroyed by earthquakes in the mid-4th century and not rebuilt until the mid-5th century. Some statuary was dumped into drains or built into later structures. However, some statues were found fallen from their bases onto the palaestra floor (a Nemesis and two statues of Asklepios). Others lay on the palaestra floor (Isis, Zeus enthroned, Apollo). Still other statues found in a water tank must have been thrown there during the building’s final destruction in the 7th century, as the tank remained in use until then (finds in the water tank included Aphrodite, the weary Hercules, a river god, and a nude male torso). The genitals of all the nude male statues were chiselled away; it seems that they were displayed in this castrated form in the late antique phase (Hannestad 2001). Of these statues that were still on display in the bath’s final phase, the weary Hercules is a distinctive design originated by the sculptor Lysippos and subsequently much adapted. It is difficult to judge whether this statue was selected for its association with a famous sculptor or because it conveyed a patron god of the gymnasium so very well. Be that as it may, it is important to note that statuary remained on display, and appears to have been chosen thematically rather than for its relationship to famous Greek sculptors.

Statuary assemblages from late antique villas

The final context where it is possible to use excavated evidence in evaluating attitudes or practices of late antique aristocrats concerning sculptural originals or imitations is in their homes. Although writers of the period displayed knowledge (albeit rather conventional or narrow) of Greek sculptors and masterpieces through their epigrams, letters, and other writings, archaeological evidence shows us that their personal assemblages of sculpture built on appropriate themes for décor rather than emphasizing works of famous masters (insofar as we

can now identify those works).¹⁹ Most of these statues were carved in a Classical or Hellenistic style, and their content drew on the general formulae for depicting particular gods. Most villas possessed antique pieces, and a few owned contemporary works.

Particularly popular in the assemblages of statuary in late antique villas across the empire were the hunting Diana, Venus, and the circle of Dionysos, though they do not all appear in each assemblage (Stirling 2005, 219–24). For example, at the villa of Saint-George-de-Montagne in Gaul, there are well-preserved late antique statuettes of Venus and Diana, while a head of a panther was probably an attribute for a statue of Dionysos pouring out wine. Asklepios, Hygieia and Kybele were particularly popular in the East Mediterranean and Italy. Again this reflects an interest in content more than artistic origins.

A few villas stand out for having more identifiable copies of Greek works by famous artists or even original Greek or Hellenistic artworks (the latter not by named artists, however). At the villa of Piazza Armerina in Sicily, the torso of the Apollo Lycaeus attributed to Praxiteles survives (Gentili 1999, 15, no. 4, figs. 7–9). The weary Hercules attributed to Lysippos, popular throughout the Roman period, also appeared in some late antique homes, including the villa of Chiragan in southern Gaul (Cazes 1999, 110–11), the villa of San Giusto in Italy (Volpe 1998, 73), the House of the Gladiators in Kourion on Cyprus (Fejfer 2006, 121), and the Panayia Domus in Corinth (Fig. 6.1; Stirling 2008, 106–8). Three late antique statuettes of Aphrodite binding her sandal (a late Hellenistic invention not attributed to a particular sculptor) are known, two from domestic contexts in Egypt and Portugal.

The domestic findspots include a probable suburban villa at Sidi Bishr near Alexandria (Stirling 2005, 100–101, fig. 49) and the villa of Quinta das Longas in Portugal (Nogales Basarrate *et al.* 2004, 125–28, fig. 10). A third late antique statuette was found in Sidon, but less is known of the context (Stirling 2005, 100–1, fig. 48). A late antique domestic collection at the Barracks Villa in Antioch had a statuette-sized torso of the Sandalbinder (Brinkerhoff 1970, 38, fig. 53). It is difficult to date a headless, nude piece, but this statuette may be a fourth late antique sculpture of this subject.



Fig. 6.1. Statuettes found at the Panayia Domus, Corinth. Courtesy Corinth Excavations.

There is one example of very old statues (Hellenistic) curated within a late antique collection. A villa at Fianello Sabino was converted into a church in the 5th century (Vorster 1998; Stirling 2005, 174). Built into the foundations of the church were fragments of at least fifteen marble statues imported from Greece. They dated to the 2nd and 1st centuries BC and had evidently adorned this villa for many centuries before their destruction. Original reliefs dating to the Classical or Hellenistic periods appeared in homes in Athens (Stirling 2005, 201, 204), Stobi (Stirling 2005, 197–99), and Ephesos (Rathmayr 2005, 208–11, 214–16, 219–20, pl. 138).

The late antique houses and villas of Greece present something of an exception to this generalization that villa patrons valued subject matter over associations with famous sculptors. Alongside formulaic renderings of popular figures such as Asklepios, Hygieia, and Artemis, are a handful of statuettes that clearly copy famous monuments made by famous artists. These include copies of the Athena Parthenos (by Phidias), the gold-and-ivory cult statue of Asklepios at Epidauros (by Thrasybulos), and the Niobid group, which may reflect the decoration of the base of the cult statue of Zeus at Olympia (by Phidias). These statuettes are products of the Attic sarcophagus workshops. Some of them are clearly among the later products of the Attic workshops and therefore date to the mid-3rd century or later, quite possibly in the early 4th century. These works come from domestic contexts in Athens, Corinth, and Inatos on Crete. Let us consider some of these statuettes.²⁰

The best known of these statuettes is the Varvakeion Athena, a statuette that clearly copies the Athena Parthenos, the gold-and-ivory

cult statue in the Parthenon (Lange 1880; Schuchhardt 1963; Stirling 2005, 209; Stirling 2008, 134, 140–44). It was found in the late 19th century with an Asklepios and a female head in a room with frescoed walls, probably part of a house. The statuette of Athena dates this assemblage to the mid-3rd century or later. Interestingly, a later find in the same vicinity was an original marble head from one of the Parthenon metopes.²¹ While it is not possible on the recorded evidence to definitively link these two finds, they raise the tantalizing possibility of a late antique collector who owned both an original work by Phidias and a finely crafted copy of the Phidian cult statue. The link remains highly speculative, however. A second copy of the Parthenos from this period is known through a small head found on the Akropolis (Karanastassis 1987, 411, no. BI14).

A collection of statuettes found in a late antique house at Corinth clearly favours copies of recognizable statuary (Fig. 6.1).²² The Panayia Domus was extensively renovated in the late 3rd or early 4th century. It was destroyed in a fire sometime after the 360s. A collection of nine broken statuettes was found jumbled on the floor of one of the rooms. The statuettes themselves range in date from the late 1st or early 2nd century to the 4th century, but all were clearly in use in a house shrine in the later 4th century when the house was destroyed. The collection included a statuette of Asklepios enthroned, clearly inspired by the chryselephantine statue by Thrasybulos of Paros at Epidauros. The weary Herakles imitates the formula of the Lysippan weary Herakles. The so-called Aspasia is a distinctive figure known in more than thirty examples from Roman times, though the identity of this figure is not known. Modern scholars have proposed Aphrodite Sosandra and Europa as identities for this figure (Ridgway 1970, 65–67; Guerrini 1974). The enthroned Roma may be inspired by the pedimental statuary of Temple E in the forum of Corinth. Other pieces in the collection (two Artemises, a Dionysos, another Asklepios, and a head of Pan) follow familiar formulae for these divinities.

Lastly, statuettes of Artemis and Niobe found on Crete and probably deriving from a seaside villa are clearly copies of a particular statuary group (Marinatos 1934–35; Stirling 2008, 142–43, fig. 30). A group of statues found in Rome and now displayed in Florence depict the slaughter of Niobe's children by Apollo and Artemis (Geominy 1992, 918, no. 23a–k, pl. 615). Thought to be Hellenistic in origin, this group was clearly appreciated in Roman times, as matching statues have been found elsewhere, in particular a large set at Hadrian's villa at Tivoli. The Inatos Niobe matches the one from the Horti of Sallust. The Artemis matches relief scenes of the slaughter of the Niobids that are thought to be inspired by the decoration on the base of the cult statue of Zeus at Olympia (by Phidias). Pausanias (5.11.2) tells us that

the base for this statue showed the slaughter of the Niobids, so it is possible that the Cretan group evokes that particular monument.

Thus, there are hints that Attic sculptors catering to a Greek clientèle did produce intentional copies of certain masterpieces for domestic décor. The Greek taste for these works ties in to the intellectual milieu of the Second Sophistic, with its emphasis on pride in Greek culture. Nonetheless, notwithstanding the Attic statuettes, a few examples of *opera nobilia*, and the occasional Classical or Hellenistic piece held in a late antique assemblage, the vast majority of late antique aristocrats appear to have built up or curated statuary holdings based on subject matter.

Conclusions

We have examined three bodies of evidence to elucidate the question of late antique originals and imitations: writings by late antique authors, accounts of special collections in Constantinople, and actual excavated material from baths and villas. There are relatively frequent references to the brilliance of particular artists and even poems imagining the verisimilitude or iconography of particular statues, but these turn out to be quite conventional topoi when viewed together. The founding of Constantinople and the establishment of Christianity as the official religion of the empire meant that emperor commandeered countless artworks from the cities and sanctuaries of the empire to decorate his new capital. Many of these did have significance as “originals,” but it was their historical or geographical role that made them important. A few statues by well-known artists appeared in the early 5th-century collection of Lausus, but even here it is not clear whether these statues were Greek originals in the sense that modern scholars understand. Likewise, labelled statue bases in Rome attributed statues to the famous Greek masters, but there is little impression in contemporary writing that these statues shaped the comments or appreciation of aristocratic viewers. In locales where aristocratic patrons had more say in the choice of statuary, such as bath buildings or domestic collections, choices were largely determined by appropriate subject matter that suited the locale or the cultured persona of the patron. The concept of the original masterpiece executed by a brilliant artist was a rhetorical concept whose value lay in metaphor, comparison, and rivalry.

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1 Kahil 1984, 646, no. 274, pl. 468 = Simon and Bauchhenß 1984, 808, no. 35. For Dionysos and related figures: Bartman 2002.

2 For instance, K. Hartswick (1990) interprets the Ares Borghese type as an Augustan classicizing creation representing Gaius rather than a copy of a 5th-century BC original by Alkamenēs.

3 I have been too credulous about these references in the past, see Stirling 2005, 149.

4 Epig. 12 (Occasio), 63–70 (heifer of Myron), 62 (Knidia). For commentary, see Kay 2001, 97–103, 195–208.

5 Late antique education at all stages focused on classical literature in an educational “curriculum” that had changed little over the centuries. Thus, to judge from Egyptian papyri, Homer was by far the most frequently read author (certain books predominating over others), followed by Euripides, Hesiod, and Menander (Cribiore 2001, 192–205, with discussion of different forms of evidence). Certain books of Homer or plays of Euripides enjoyed particular prominence. Ausonius (*Protrepticus ad nepotem*) lists the authors his grandson ought to study: Homer, Menander, Valerius Flaccus, Virgil, Terence, Cicero, and Sallust, among others. A school text probably written in Gaul in the 4th century lists these authors too: Dionisotti 1982, 122. Other works of the early empire were still in circulation.

6 On the phenomenon of moving statues more generally, see Brandenburg 1989; Curran 1994; Lepelley 1994.

7 One late antique statuary collection from Saint-Georges-de-Montagne in southwest Gaul did include a marble head of a heifer (Stirling 1996, 125–26). A marble urn from Rome may depict this statue, Zanker 1997, 189, fig. 18.

8 Ausonius’ contemporary, the Athenian orator Himerios (Or. 64.4), mentions people visiting Knidos to see Praxiteles’ work, ‘Praxiteles’ workshop was small, but everyone sailed to Cnidus’ (trans. Penella 2007, 140). Though this statement has been taken as evidence for 4th-century “art tourism” (for instance, Corso 2001, 20), it comes in a conventional passage where Himerios is comparing his own modest school to the deceptively small workshops of great artistic masters and is couched in the past tense.

9 It probably initially stood in Constantine’s basilica in Constantinople and was

later moved to the Hippodrome.

10 A roughly contemporary installation of this subject matter is a pair of statues of Eros stringing the bow adorning a fountain built in the early 5th century in Ostia, Stirling 2005, 172.

11 Bassett (2004, 90) argues that the Zeus and Athena may have arrived during the reign of Theodosius; Eusebius (VC 3.54), Themistius (Or. 17.308) and Zosimus (Or. 18.324) tell us that the statues of the muses were brought there by Constantine. None of the ancient sources refers to the name of the artist, only to the original location. Pausanias (9.30.1) described two different statuary groups of the muses at Mount Helicon and named artists for them, among them Kephisodotos. These artists do not include any of the ones most commonly named in late antique references.

12 This description of the baths is drawn from Bassett 2004, 51–58. A. Kaldellis (2007) cautions against reading this (or any) ekphrasis too literally, discussing the usages of the genre and the particular interests of Christodoros.

13 Kaldellis (2007, 371) suggests that Christodoros avoids artists' names intentionally to highlight better his own creativity in bringing the statues to life verbally. The same emphasis on iconography over authorship appears in a rhetorical lesson also of the 5th century. A *progymnasma* (didactic rhetorical exercise) by Nikolaos of Myra describes a statue of Herakles leaning on his club (discussed by Moreno 1982, 455–56; Hebert 1983, 52–62). The description sounds like the immensely popular weary Herakles of Lysippos, known most famously through the Farnese Hercules from the Baths of Caracalla. Nikolaos does not exploit this famous pedigree, but rather is interested in the iconography and underlying moral message (Hebert 1989, 233).

14 Manderscheid (1981, 28–45 (iconography and themes). One oddity in the Baths of Zeuxippos is that the healing gods Asklepios and Hygieia are not mentioned, though Bassett speculates that they may have appeared in a missing section of Christodoros' poem.

15 *CIL* 8.25837 = 8.1297 = 8.14799. This dates to the reign of Honorius and Theodosius. Another inscription from Abbir Maius dating to AD 368–70 specifies statues (*signa*; *AE* 1975, 873).

16 However, pieces thrown into swimming pools could not have arrived there while the baths were still in use. Large statues found on the floors of frigidaria and the like presumably were not lying around as rubble during the late antique phase of the baths, but must rather have been in use. Statuary reused as building material and limekilns set up in baths in post-antique times to burn statues and other marble items are complicating factors, as they not only destroyed the statues originally in the baths, but created a motive to bring in statuary from other locales.

17 The following discussion is drawn from Smith 2007. For baths in Ephesos, see Auinger and Rathmayr 2007.

18 More statues and bases are preserved from Late Antiquity than from the high empire, but statues from earlier periods may have been removed for use as fill in the city wall constructed in the 350s (Smith 2007, 209–10).

19 Surveying villa holdings in Roman and late Roman Spain, E. Koppel (1993, 199) comments on the rarity of *opera nobilia* among these works. See also Koppel and Rodà 2008.

20 Further copies of figures from the pediment of the Parthenon were found at Epidauros. The statuettes themselves date to the 3rd and 4th centuries, but were found in a late dumping of statuettes that included material ranging up to the 4th century. These include a lunging Athena (mid-3rd century; Katakis 2002, 70–73, no. 69, pl. 86–87), a second Athena (early 4th century; Katakis 2002, 73–75, no. 70, pl. 88, 89a), and a woman with billowing drapery (mid-3rd century; Katakis 2002, 90–91, no. 88, pl. 103).

21 Kourouniotos 1913, 200 (discovery of the head); Studniczka 1921, 329–34 (identification as part of a metope). J. Binder kindly pointed out this piece to me.

22 This account is based on Stirling 2008. For the particular statuettes emphasized here, see 95–101, figs. 5–7; 151, fig. 36 (Asklepios), 106–8, fig. 13 (Herakles), 93–95, fig. 3 (Aspasia), 108–13, figs. 14–15; 152, fig. 37 (Roma).

LATE ANTIQUE SCULPTURE IN AUGUSTA EMERITA AND ITS TERRITORY (HISPANIA): *OFFICINAL*, PATTERNS AND CIRCUITS

Trinidad Nogales Basarrate

Augusta Emerita was a colony founded by Augustus in the late 1st century BC for the veterans of the legions V and X, hence its name Emerita and the marked Italian character of the settlers in the early years (Saquete 1997; 2004), something which is clearly reflected in the architectural and sculptural style of this Hispanic urban site (Trillmich 1990; Nogales Basarrate 2004). The foundation of the new colony was a result of the end of the wars against the Cantabrians in the north of Hispania. This event completed the process of conquest and the full Romanization of the Iberian Peninsula (Curchin 1991), and it was followed by the reorganization of the Hispanic provinces by Augustus (Keay 1988; Sayas 1989). The new colony would be the capital of the new westernmost Hispanic province of Lusitania, a territory currently shared between Spain and Portugal (De Francisco 1989; Pérez Vilatela 2004), whose origins we are gradually coming to understand more clearly (Martín Bravo 1999; Gorges and Nogales Basarrate 2010). The historical evolution of the Roman colony of Augusta Emerita over more than six centuries began with its Augustan foundation and ended with the arrival of the Visigoths (Panzram 2002; Arce 2004).

Late antique Emerita was an interesting stage in the development of Hispania, and numerous elements for reflection arise from the study of the period (Arce 1982; 2002; Bowes and Kulikowski 2005). On the one hand, the site's epigraphy bears witness to the vitality of the Constantinian period (García Iglesias 1972; Ramírez Sádaba 2004), a period in which significant reforms of urban public works resulted in

the rebuilding of, e.g., the theatre and the circus (Álvarez 1982), as attested by both epigraphy and the building remains in these entertainment complexes (Nogales Basarrate 2000, 30–32, 46; Durán 2004). On the other hand, urban archaeology reveals a powerful, dynamic city during the late Empire (Mateos 1995; Alba 1998), which later gave way to a process of urban transformation which culminated in the arrival of the Arabs in the 8th century (Mateos and Alba 2000; Alba 2001). We must not forget that after the administrative reform of Diocletian, Augusta Emerita would play a prominent role in Hispania and the Empire as a whole, as it became the centre of the Dioecesis Hispaniarum, on which vast territories depended, spreading across to the north of Africa, and the seat of the *vicarius* (Étienne 1982; Arce 2004, 12–13).

What can we learn about the period of Late Antiquity from its sculptural production? In recent years the analysis of numerous sculptural materials from Augusta Emerita has enabled us to widen our perspective over a historical era which seemed to be the end of the flourishing period of the Principate. In the following pages we will deal with some questions on the value of these late antique images in Augusta Emerita as a consequence of a process of change, which was to bring about new styles of sculpture which would serve as the prelude to the Middle Ages.

Sculptural output in Augusta Emerita: genesis and assimilation

This zone of western Hispania in the pre-Roman era did not possess a consolidated sculptural tradition which could serve as the substratum for the new iconographic models newly arrived from Italy (Nogales and Gonçalves 2002, 287–92), in contrast to the east and south of the peninsula, where the indigenous Iberian culture had already created high-quality sculpture (León 1998). This lack of pre-Roman sculpture meant that, from the Augustan colonization onwards, the area of Lusitania quickly adopted the new sculptural Roman models introduced by the new settlers (Nogales and Gonçalves 2008, 655–58).

The early years of the colony were characterized by an almost symbolic presence of marble and an abundant use of local stones, especially the granites from the region around Augusta Emerita, which are the basic material in the colony's architecture (Nogales Basarrate 2003; Nogales, Gonçalves and Lapuente 2008, 411–22).

Parallel to the presence of local stones in architecture, marble was used for a distinctly Roman artistic genre, the portraiture of individuals, a majority of whom were the founding *coloni* of Emerita

(Nogales Basarrate 1997). This sculptural group of private portraits from the early period reinforces the idea of the systematic import of models from Rome in view of the non-existence of a local sculptural tradition. These highly realistic portraits of local individuals followed the tradition in the purest Italic style with a Republican flavour. This phenomenon persisted from the 1st century onwards in the form of funerary monuments with *aediculae*, one of the favourite models adopted from Rome (Edmondson *et al.* 2001).

With the consolidation of the imperial cult in the Augustan and Julio-Claudian periods (Nogales and González 2007), the official sculptural models of the *Urbs* gradually became the trend in the provincial workshops. This brought about the arrival of artists who were acquainted with the metropolitan models (Nogales Basarrate 2009; 2010), and thus consolidated an important site for the production of statues from the local marble quarries, fully exploited from the 1st century to the 4th century (Nogales *et al.* 2008, 422–46). The decorative programmes in both *fora* are the most outstanding examples of this imitation of metropolitan models (Nogales and Álvarez 2006): on the one hand, the so-called Augusteum, which took its inspiration from the *forum Augustum* in Rome (Trillmich 1994; Álvarez and Nogales 2003), and on the other hand, the provincial forum dated to the Tiberian period (Nogales Basarrate 2007a, 497–513).

This process of creation and diffusion of provincial patterns in Emerita during the Principate consolidated the position of the city as a very important artistic centre. Augusta Emerita was perfectly integrated into the creative circuits of the period and for several centuries it received and distributed the products and artistic patterns of the highest standards of quality (Nogales Basarrate 2009b; 2010).

Sculpture in Augusta Emerita in the later Roman Empire

Generally, it can be assumed that sculpture in Augusta Emerita, from the 3rd century onwards, underwent a remarkable transformation process in both quantitative and qualitative terms. This process needs to be integrated within the broader framework of the peninsula as a whole (Vidal 2005). It is a fact that there was a decrease in sculptural production that cannot be attributed to the accidental nature of archaeological findings alone. Other reasons must be sought out. We have previously stated that Emerita's sculpture, between the 3rd and 5th centuries, started a process of change which culminated in the 6th century with the rich production of the Visigothic sculptural

workshops (Cruz Villalón 1985 and 2000). In broad terms, we are able to state that the *officinae emeritenses* initiated profound transformations in the sculptural forms, themes and types, and similarly, a change occurred in the production sites.

Official sculpture

Judging by the finds, it seems that the 3rd and 4th centuries saw the almost complete disappearance of the great public programmes given that there are no remaining sculptural monuments in these complexes at Emerita dating to later than the 2nd century (Nogales Basarrate 2007a). However, official epigraphy shows important activity in these complexes (Ramírez 2003, 112–16), which must have involved sculptural production. In the Constantinian period, as Stylow (2001, 141–56) has noted, the cities stopped erecting statues to the emperor, and the great programmes were taken over by the central administration; i.e., by the Roman governors. In this manner, the projects came closer to central models. But the imperial cult was still alive in the images of the 3rd and 4th centuries (Turcan 1978; Nogales Basarrate 2007a, 471–79).

In the same way as Rome was a well-documented flourishing urban centre in the Constantinian period (Ross Holloway 2004; Donati and Gentili 2005; Demandt and Engelmann 2007), it seems that Augusta Emerita underwent a new period of prosperity in the 4th century, as is attested by the transformations in its public buildings (Arce 2002, 249). The Roman theatres in Hispania were the object of reforms during the late Empire (Oepen 2003). Augusta Emerita's theatre was greatly altered in the 4th century (Álvarez 1982, 309–10; Trillmich 1995, 282; Nogales Basarrate 2007b, 118–22). This is attested in epigraphic (García Iglesias 1972, 81–84; Ramírez 2003, 112–16) and decorative (Álvarez 1982, 310; Blanco 1982, 23–28; Durán 2004, 124–26) evidence and in the details of the building itself. The circus was also improved to repair damage caused by the passage of time (Ramírez 2003, 116–20). The whole city seems to have been in a process of change (Arce 2002, 181–94; Oepen 2003, 205–8).

Between 333 and 335, the period of Constantine and his sons, Constans and Constantius, great alterations took place. These building works were supervised by *Severus, praeses provinciae Lusitaniae*, as can be seen in the inscription (Wickert 1934; Chastagnol 1976). In the same way, the decorative materials found during the excavations were related by J. Álvarez (1982, 310) and A. Blanco (1982, 25–27) to the decorative alteration of its stage front. This means that during the 4th century, the sculptural workshops in Emerita were working in full swing.

The epigraphy is clear with regard to the novelties and the much sought urban morphological changes promoted by Roman officials, a *comes* and a governor of Lusitania (Álvarez 1982, 310). Thus it would not be strange if, as part of the urban transformation promoted by Roman authorities, statues of the emperor as well as other related symbols had been incorporated. There is epigraphic evidence of a statue-base from which we can infer the presence of an imperial statue from that period (*CIL* II, 481; Arce 1977–1978, 257–58) as part of the above-mentioned Constantinian epigraphic series from the main monumental centres in Augusta Emerita (Ramírez 2003, 106–24, cat. 60–5). It is thus acceptable to think of it as an appropriate act of propaganda for the “new Augustus”.

We believe that it is in this phase of important morphological changes in the theatre that a great colossal statue was set up. Its fragments were found among the materials of the early excavations (Fig. 7.1). Given its fragmented state and the absence of further complementary information, the statue might have been either an emperor in military apparel, *thoracata* (Acuña 1975; Stemmer 1978), or an idealized feminine figure also in military dress. Thus it could be an allegoric statue of Dea Roma (Nogales Basarrate 2009). Alternatively, the type could be related to the representations of Constantine in military apparel, either standing or sitting (Delbrueck 1933, 110–31; L’Orange 1965, 47–65; L’Orange and Unger 1984, 58–80; Hannestad 2007).

If it was the case of the Dea Roma, from the iconography documented in Hispania in the early imperial period in Carmo and the theatres of Segobriga (Trillmich *et al.* 1993, 390, figs. 190b, 191), and Caesaraugusta (Rodà 2007, fig. 19), it would follow the sitting iconography as shown in medallions of the Constantinian period (Di Filippo 1997, 706). Dea Roma is associated with the emperor from the Augustan period up to the late Roman Empire (Vermeule 1959; Fayer 1975 and 1976; Di Filippo 1997), and was probably present in Augusta Emerita in a temple in the colonial forum, perhaps devoted to Rome and Augustus (Álvarez and Nogales 2003, 289).

A relief with a scene of imperial victory also from the theatre and preserved in the Museo Nacional de Arte Romano (MNAR) (Fig. 7.2), may be related to the colossal statuary fragments just discussed (Fig. 7.1). The mounted emperor has been identified either with Maximianus Herculeus (Arce 1982, 359) or with Constantine (Trillmich 1997, 131–41; Trillmich 2004, 282–83; Vidal 2005, 27–29, fig. 13). In this image, the princeps is under the protection of Victory defeating a fallen enemy before a military trophy. It comes from the theatre, and it has great iconographic interest for the Constantinian period. The problem is that only hypotheses can be proposed with

regard to its location in the theatre. As has already been stated in other studies, the relief might have been located at the base of the colossal statue following the patterns found at Rome (Nogales Basarrate 2007a, 118–22).



Fig. 7.1. Fragments of a colossal statue from the Roman Theatre, cat. nos. 12.139, 21.538 and 22.227 (photo MNAR, C. López).



Fig. 7.2. Relief with a scene of imperial victory, cat. no. 37028 (photo MNAR).

For this colossal statue of the late Roman period found in the theatre, we have proposed a hypothetical location in the section between the theatre and the amphitheatre, a relevant space with a special symbolism of power (Nogales Basarrate 2009, 242–46), following some clearly defined patterns used in colossal works in the city of Rome (Ruck 2007). The location would be very similar to numerous examples in Rome (La Rocca 2000), among which the Nero colossus stands out. It was built and placed by Hadrian between the Colosseum and the temple of Venus and Rome (Ensoli 2000, 66–67). The presence of a colossal statue in this site would follow a very

normal scheme in the late antique city (Ruck 2007, 86–104). The image would remind the people in Emerita of its Augustan foundation in both cases, either as Constantinus in the form of the “new Augustus” or as Dea Roma (Nogales Basarrate 2009, 246). The position of the image of power in a context of transition leading towards the Christianization of the city (Benoist 2001, 258–59), reflects some very clearly defined codes, among which urban visibility was one of the most important (Safran 2006, 43–73).

Imperial portraits

From the 3rd century onwards there was a diminution of imperial images, which would carry on into the 4th century (Delbrueck 1933; L’Orange 1965; L’Orange and Unger 1984; Hannestad 2007). J. Arce (1977–1978, 253–56) considers that the decline of imperial images is connected to a series of political, economic and administrative factors, which he links to a transfer of power from the west to the east. With that transfer of power came a loss of political presence, coupled with an economic decline and the gradual disappearance of the imperial cult from the *dioecesis hispaniarum* from the 4th and into the 5th century.

The written record of the period of Late Antiquity in Augusta Emerita is quite abundant (Ramírez 2003, 112–66). This means that imperial images must have existed in the public arena where monumental inscriptions referring to emperors and other public figures of the time were to be found. All these inscriptions refer to public works carried out at the behest of the Roman administration (Arce 1977–1978, 260–61). However, the iconographic remains of these putative works of the Principate and of Late Antiquity in Emerita are quite scarce and hardly amount to proper testimony. We can take this to be as a result of the haphazard nature of all archaeological findings, together with the systematic re-use of materials and the application of *damnatio memoriae* in certain cases.

If we consider the large statue from the Theatre, which could be an imperial colossus, as an exception, we have only two examples of smaller images which might represent emperors of the late Empire in Augusta Emerita. The first of these is a small head (Fig. 7.3) made of what seems to be local marble. It cannot be determined whether this was part of a bust or was destined to be a part of a whole body statue. Its workmanship appears hasty, giving the impression of something yet to be finished, or which has, perhaps, been re-touched. Neither does its provenance supply us with any further information, given that although it was kept in the theatre, its true origin remains unknown. It displays no particular, exceptional quality, perhaps as a result of its

poor state of conservation. Its hairstyle and iconography with its decorated *corona civilis* led J. Arce (1974) to consider it to be a portrait of Crispus or some other emperor of the late Empire from the end of the 3rd or the beginning of the 4th century. Neither can we discount the possibility that it might be one of the sons of Constantine, whose presence in Emerita is well documented in the written records of the time (Arce 1974, 158).



Fig. 7.3. Imperial portrait of Crispus, end of the 3rd century or beginning of the 4th century, cat. no. 91 (photo MNAR).



Fig. 7.4. Imperial portrait, end of the 4th century AD (photo MNAR).

The second piece is a small head, made of a material that appears to be alabaster, which represents an emperor of the late Empire crowned with a laurel wreath (Fig. 7.4; Nogales and Barrero 2009, 27). Given

the small size of the piece, it is difficult to establish if the head formed part of a complete statue or if it was destined to finish off the body of a statue made elsewhere. This piece, due to its form and perhaps to its strange morphology, had been missed by peninsular catalogues of the time, in spite of the fact that it appeared in the Mérida excavations of 1789. It was housed in the collections of the Royal Cabinet of Natural History and was re-located in the 19th century to the collection of the National Archaeological Museum in Madrid (MAN, cat. no. 2738), where it remains to this day. An analysis of its general style and of the treatment of its hairstyle, together with the features of its face, leads us to date this portrait to the end of the 4th century. It shows similarities to portraits from the same period of Valentinian I, Valens or Gratian (Nogales and Barrero 2009, 27).

These two pieces are modest examples of official portraiture from the late Empire in Mérida. Their small size makes us think of decorative pieces, perhaps forming part of a group or being used as decoration within the domestic context, where imperial portraits were synonymous with support for the regime, as demonstrated by the splendid little bust in miniature of Septimius Severus, which came from a *domus* (Nogales Basarrate 1993, 175).

The private world: the urban portrait and domestic materials

Privately owned sculptures and especially portraits and other decorative domestic sculpture had, from the 3rd century, begun a process of adaptation to a new age in provincial workshops: the private urban portrait as a sculptural archetype began to diminish both in quality and in quantity and came to be substituted by other forms (Nogales Basarrate 1997, 165–69).

The free-standing funerary portrait typical of the Principate gradually becomes incorporated into a series of monuments in the first and second centuries as we see in monuments and altars featuring a portrait of the deceased, the like of which we see in Rome (Edmondson *et al.* 2001). This type of monument in the 3rd century begins a stage of production in series, which would go on to define the changes to personal funerary imagery from that time until its disappearance.

The 3rd-century *stelae* from Mérida form part of an interesting series, with parallels in monuments from the south of Gallia. This relationship is not a casual one, given that the military structures of the time united both territories, and so new people and new workshop techniques could mingle (Nogales Basarrate 1997, 155–61).

There is scarcely any evidence of decorated sarcophagi from

Augusta Emerita. Only a few fragments have been preserved: one of them with a portrait of the deceased (Fig. 7.5). The piece is made of marble from Mijas, which means that it could have been brought from another centre in the peninsula (Nogales Basarrate 1997, 99–10, fig. 60 D). In the collections of the National Museum of Roman Art, however, there are several smooth sarcophagi – simple monolithic boxes in which to deposit the remains of the dead. These are very similar to other finds from within the territory of Baetica (Beltrán, García and Rodríguez 2006, 45–50). Faced with an absence of sarcophagi in the rest of the peninsula, these pieces, whether of local manufacture or imported, become a point of reference with regard to cultural centres in Hispania (Noguera and Conde 2001; Clavería 2001; Beltrán, García and Rodríguez 2006).



Fig. 7.5. Sarcophagus from Augusta Emerita (photo MNAR).

A singular piece of domestic decoration from Mérida in the late Roman period is a highly decorated well parapet (Fig. 7.6). The piece was discovered by J. Álvarez (1946) and subsequently analysed by A. García y Bellido (1949) and J. Arce (1976). This is a *puteal* or well parapet worked in local marble in a monolithic block, which presupposes a major effort, given the quantity of material used. The most singular element is its iconography, occupying each one of the faces of an octagon, which make up the pseudo-cylindrical form of the

piece. It depicts a scene featuring the circle of Dionysos, including the god himself alongside Ariadne, Pan, Eros, a satyr and a maenad and dolphins that were a part of Dionysos' entourage. The piece was without doubt from a local workshop, and it dates to somewhere between the end of the 4th and the beginning of the 5th century. It forms an integral part of an urban trend both in mosaics and perhaps in sculpture which repeats pagan models and resists abandoning previous iconographic forms.



Fig. 7.6. Well parapet in a house, late 4th century (photo MNAR).

Sculptural output of the villae of Augusta Emerita and its territory

An important rural boom took place in the Iberian Peninsula during the 4th and 5th centuries. The most genuine expressions of this phenomenon were the *villae* (Gorges 1979; Fernández 1982; Noguera 1995). We are gradually developing a better understanding of the decoration in the *villae* in *Hispania* (Koppel 1993 and 1995). The prospect for the Baetica is fairly wide (Rodríguez Oliva 1993 and 2004; Noguera 2000). The *villae* in the *territorium* of *Emerita* possess a large range of ornamental materials among which mosaics and sculpture stand out (Álvarez and Nogales 1994). Our studies on the sculptural programmes in the *villae* of our territory (Nogales and Creus 1999) enabled us not just to better understand the scattered materials, but also to analyse issues related to workshops and production circuits

(Nogales Basarrate 1999).

The production of mosaics in the *villae* of the 4th century is very interesting. However, in the ornamental field, local sculptural productions with a quality inferior to that of urban works alternated with imported works that were highly prestigious for their owners. Let us now analyse some examples of these exceptional sculptures which were part of the artistic circuits of Augusta Emerita in the 4th and 5th centuries.

This exceptional male bust-portrait in the Museum of Badajoz (Fig. 7.7) appeared near Emerita within the *pars urbana* in the context of a large private *villa* richly decorated with paving and sculptures in a huge room near a large pond (Nogales and Creus 1999, 511–16). The bust-portrait represents a young male clad in a *toga contabulata*, and whose features are characteristic of the late Severan portraits, to the extent that it quite resembles the emperor Alexander Severus (222–235) himself. This similarity between private portraits and those of emperors is quite a common factor throughout the Empire, thus creating what we could call a “period style.” Besides, this resemblance had a powerful ideological reason: to prove the adherence of the provincial elites to the Roman political system which was personified in the image of the *princeps*.

This work is of exceptional quality and since it is made in Lusitanian local marble we can infer that it was made in an *officina emeritense*. It is difficult to determine whether the sculptor was a local artist or whether it is an artist from Rome who was acquainted with the patterns of the official imperial image. Could this be the *imago* of the villa’s *dominus*? This is a common idea for numerous peninsular mosaics which represent hunting scenes where the *dominus* exercises his *uirtus* and flaunts in front of his subjects.

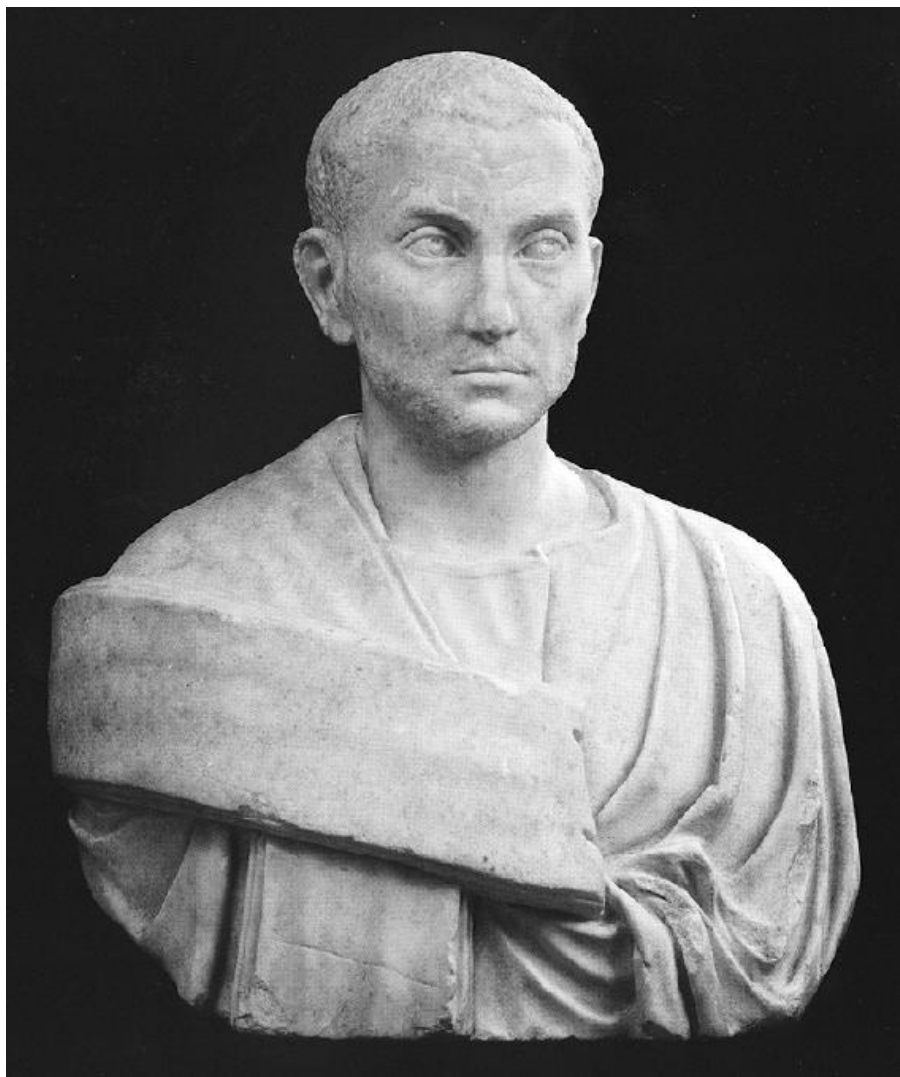


Fig. 7.7. Roman portrait bust from the 'Villa de la Majona' (photo Museum, V. Novillo).

Exceptional example of imported works are the sculptural cycles of Quinta das Longas, a *villa* in the *territorium* of the provincial capital (Nogales *et al.* 2004). This *villa* must have gone through several occupancy phases from the 2nd century onwards. In its thriving period in the 4th century, its *pars urbana*, probably a *nymphaeum*, was decorated with statuary groups which repeat well-known cycles in the environment of the 4th century "neoclassicism" (Kiilerich 1993; Hannestad 1994), they are groups with Artemis, Venus, Giants, Muses and various other subject matter (Fig. 7.8). The quality of the white, fine-grained marble used reveals that the materials were imported. It has been associated with foreign workshops dating to the 4th century,

which are related to artistic circles of Aphrodisias (Nogales *et al.* 2008, 433–34).

However, this was not an isolated phenomenon; imported sculptures are also found in other *villae* in Hispania, as is the case with the interesting example of Valdetorres de Jarama (Puerta *et al.* 1994), whose giants are splendid parallels for the one in Quinta das Longas, although the former were made in black marble from the Aphrodisias region (Fig. 7.9). This phenomenon, as stated by Hannestad (2002, 643), reveals a process of change in the dawn of the ideal Roman plastic arts. On the other hand, the productive workshops in Aphrodisias flooded both the provincial and the metropolitan region with larger works (Bergmann 1999).

The decorative programme at Quinta das Longas is evidence of the fact that in the 4th century, the local workshops and materials production had decreased. This phenomenon is revealed by the constant reuse of imperial marbles from the 4th and 5th centuries onwards, a process which was at its highest during the 6th century, as can be seen in the Visigothic sculptural collections in Mérida.



Fig. 7.8 Venus from the Roman villa of Quinta das Longas (photo: courtesy A. Carvalho).

Lastly, we must point out the presence of highly prestigious works such as the Missorium of Theodosius (Arce 1976; Almagro *et al.* 2000),

attributed to an *officina* from Constantinople, in the Augusta Emerita region, which shows the important artistic bonds between this remote, far-off western point of the empire and the great production centres in the East. This image of the emperor on a precious metal base was nothing new in the environment of the cult to the emperor. Numerous inscriptions throughout the empire have been preserved which recall the donations of statues in precious metals, although in this case it was a luxury or votive object. The image of the emperor and his entourage repeats a well-known scheme (Kiilerich 2000), and in these works it replaces the previous marble sculptures which had been gradually disappearing between the late 3rd century and the 4th century.



Fig. 7.9. Giant from Valdeterres (photo: courtesy A. Carvalho).

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TEMPLES AND CIVIC REPRESENTATION IN THE THEODOSIAN PERIOD

Ine Jacobs

Even though the level of elite-competition and the consequent patronage benefiting the city declined significantly after the troubled 3rd century, cities of the Eastern Mediterranean saw a resurgence of both construction and renovation activities in the later 4th and early 5th century. In fact, all major evolutions characterising Late Antiquity, including the appearance of fortification walls and heterogeneous street colonnades, the abandonment of pagan temples and the construction of monumental churches on highly visible locations, were either initiated or in full progress.¹ Although these later developments in the public sphere have often been labelled as inferior to those of the “golden” Roman era, it is possible to identify the presence of aesthetic principles and concerns similar to those of previous centuries. In the context of this article, I will focus on the least welcome, but at the same time very conspicuous elements of the cityscape in the Theodosian period: temples. When reviewing the evidence from this period, it is clear that civic and imperial authorities alike struggled to find a balance between innovation and preservation. Or, in other words, between living up to a changed religious climate while maintaining the outward appearance of their city or cities as a whole.

Though the fate of temples in Late Antiquity has already drawn ample attention, they have rarely been placed within their urban context. Nevertheless, their implantation and visibility in the cityscape appear to have been crucial factors determining their later history. First of all, this article will assess how much the destruction and decay of temples would have influenced the overall appearance of the city. Subsequently, it will assert that the reuse of temple cellae and temple facades was sought after because it ensured seamless visual continuity at vital locations in the cityscape. However, since this was not possible

everywhere, civic authorities were obliged to devise matter-of-fact solutions to hide less attractive city quarters. Finally, the management of temples will be compared with other contemporary construction operations. I will mainly focus on Asia Minor – a region which remained largely undisturbed in the centuries of Late Antiquity so that changes observed here can be assumed to have been internally motivated – and expand upon this information by looking at some of the better researched sites in other regions of the Mediterranean.

Dealing with temples

By the end of the 4th century, the transition to Christianity was definite. Of course, the Christianisation of the Roman Empire was an evolution that had already been underway for more than a century. The combination of diminished resources and opposition to pagan religions must have caused the slow but certain abandonment of many temples over the course of the 4th century.² The problem became acute in the final decades of the 4th century. By then, far-reaching and often long-lasting decisions on what to do with religious remnants of the past were being made.

Temple destruction

The first question to be addressed is: how widespread was the violent destruction of temples? Many literary sources, especially the *Lives of the Saints*, attest to temples and their furnishings falling prey to passionate Christians during the late 4th and early 5th century.³ From the extremist point of view which is often expressed in these texts, temples were seen as physical obstacles to the inevitable victory of Christianity and their destruction often brought about a mass conversion of pagans (Gaddis 2005, 189–90). Some of these temples, such as the Temple of Marnas at Gaza, destroyed in 402, and the Serapeion in Alexandria, violently taken down in 391, have become quite famous because of the lively accounts written about their destruction.⁴ For that reason, they have long been considered exemplary portrayals of the fate of pagan cult sites during this period. However, when one reviews the course of history more closely, it becomes clear that such examples were always the result of a specific situation or the outcome of a series of escalating events, often brought about by a vigorous bishop.⁵ This should already serve as a warning sign that not all temples suffered the same fate.

Additionally, the imperial legislation on the matter indicates that an empire-wide policy of temple destruction did not exist. On the

contrary, the imperial government seemingly tried to safeguard temples from demolition, especially those located in an urban environment.⁶ If temple buildings were secularized – meaning: if they were stripped from their profane pagan status – by dismantling their cult statues and other depictions which were still receiving worship, or by taking away their altars, and, no doubt, by executing rites of deconsecration,⁷ they could join the existing array of civic monuments as “ornaments of public works” (*Cod. Theod.* 16.10.18 (399) and 16.10.15 (399), interpretation by Pharr 1969, 474, note 32). 4th-century historians also bear evidence to a continued aesthetical appreciation of temples. The admiration of a pagan such as Libanios (Or. 30.22) in the 4th century is hardly surprising. According to Julian (Ep. 79), a Bishop Pegasius also tried to maintain the temples of his city. In an effort to avoid rousing any suspicion, he supposedly destroyed a few. Theodoret (*HE* 5.22, 7.15) also explicitly mentioned the beauty of the Temple of Serapis at Alexandria. Eusebios contrasted the rural Temple of Aphaca, which Constantine had destroyed, with precincts located “at a city centre ... among squares and streets, such as frequently adorn the cities for decoration” (*VC* 3.55).⁸

Archaeologically, it is almost impossible to distinguish between religiously motivated destruction and the pragmatic dismantling of abandoned buildings to reuse their architectural elements, a building operation which often succeeded the abandonment of the complex by several years or even decades (cf. *infra*; see Bayliss 2004, 23–25 for a discussion pertaining to temple buildings). At the extra-urban sanctuary of Men Askaenos near Pisidian Antioch, for instance, some temple attributes were found smashed to pieces – an act which can be considered as part of the secularization process – but the dismantling of the building was connected to the construction of the first church of the community.⁹

Ruins in the cityscape

Once a temple had been vacated and secularized, several things could happen. One option was to just leave it as it was and let it fall into ruin. Non-maintenance only occurred in the countryside (see Caseau 2004 for a detailed account on the fate of rural temples) and in the outskirts of the cities.¹⁰ In contrast, temples in the flourishing cities of the East stood on urban building plots, often in the very centre of the city, and could still be used for other purposes. Moreover, not just temples, but all deserted buildings within a city represented a great danger because their decay could gravely scar the esteemed urban landscape. Laws from this period, as well as from earlier days, make it very clear that the presence of ruins created a general unease (Geyer

1993; Liverani 2004, 419–20). A building may have been praised because it was of venerable age, but under the condition that it was still in use, even if only as decorative facade.¹¹ Imperial laws generally pleaded for the renovation of “ugly ruins” which defiled the urban landscape (*Cod. Theod.* 15.1.11 (364), 15.1.16 (365), but in 398, private requests to dismantle public monuments were granted if the buildings were already in ruins or destroyed (*Cod. Theod.* 15.1.40). Similarly, one year earlier in 397, an edict authorised building elements belonging to temples to be reused in public building and maintenance projects such as roads, bridges, aqueducts and fortifications. However, the text did not refer to their demolition, and may thus very well only relate to buildings which had already decayed (*Cod. Theod.* 15.1.36).

That decaying temples damaged the overall appearance of a settlement is all the more apparent when one reviews the locations these monuments occupied in the urban landscape. Most temples had not been positioned according to theological principles, but rather with the intent to enhance their visual impact and propaganda effects. Thus, they took on prominent positions – often on heights, at the end of vistas or alongside an agora or a major street – to which they were connected by splendid entrances (Stambaugh 1978, 561–62; Price 1984, 136–40). For instance, there were temples positioned on both hills towering above the city centre of Selge. At Sagalassos, the position of the Apollo Klarios Temple to the west of the Lower Agora ensured that whoever entered the city from the south would immediately notice the sanctuary dominating both the main north-south colonnaded street of the city as well as the Lower Agora. The visibility map (Plate 16) shows that this location was visible from virtually everywhere within the settlement. At Side, the temples of Athena and Apollo were located on the tip of the peninsula and at the end of the main street, thus they were highly visible from both sea and land.

If temples within city centres were not to be destroyed, and preferably also not left to decay, for reasons of aesthetic maintenance, what then to do with all the temple buildings that had been deserted in the course of the 4th and the early 5th century? The structural state of the buildings appears to have been vital for their further life history. If the temple fabric was still in good order, a possible course of action was to reuse the sturdy monument for new functions. The visual continuity between the profane temple and the new municipal or Christian building was very high in such cases. Conversely, even if they were not violently destroyed, many temples did not survive the 4th century intact¹² because they were damaged by either earthquakes or warfare or fire. Such damaged and decaying buildings were no

longer restored; neither for further pagan use, nor for re-employment for other purposes.¹³ Instead, they were pragmatically turned into stone-quarries, supplying building blocks for new construction projects either at the same location or elsewhere in the city. Even in these cases, it can be deduced that the civic authorities were well aware of the consequences such building yards had on the overall appearance of their city, and they took measures to counter such consequences.

***In situ* conversions and visual continuity**

In comparison to the West, where pagan sites were often avoided in the 4th and 5th century (Ward-Perkins 2003, 286), temple sites in the East began to house other activities relatively quickly (see Bayliss 2004, 45–46, 58–59 for the possible continuation of other functions in temple *temenè*). One reason was probably because they took up such valuable building plots. Few major buildings had been erected in the cities of the eastern provinces after the first quarter of the 3rd century. This was not the result of an economic crisis, but had more to do with a saturation of the urban fabric after the large-scale building programmes of the preceding two centuries (Mitchell 1999 for regional differences). When temples lost their original function, the structures could be conveniently adapted to serve new purposes.

The reuse of a temple building was noted especially when it concerned the establishment of a church community. Temples which were reused as churches either as they were or with a minimum of exterior changes, however, remained a minority. First and foremost, this was due to the fact that most temple cellae were too small to host a Christian congregation (Ward-Perkins 2003, 286). Moreover, such conversions are mainly known from the second half of the 5th century onward. One of the earliest, datable to around 400, may have been the Zeus Temple at Aizanoi, which, together with its architectural decoration, has been preserved until the present day (Plate 17).¹⁴

However, by the second half of the 4th century – just after they had been vacated – intact temple buildings were already being put to new municipal uses. Few of these examples have been attested archaeologically. At Sagalassos, the cella of the so-called Doric Temple, together with the nearby Northwest Heroon, was preserved because it was incorporated as a tower in the late antique fortification wall around 400.¹⁵ It is further feasible that the cella of the Temple of Artemis at Gerasa came to house the seat of a *curator*, who was responsible for the maintenance and functioning of all municipal buildings, in the later 4th century. From this period onwards, there is also no doubt about the dismantling and redistribution of their

elements (Parapetti 2002, 32–33; Brenk 2003, 12). Literary sources frequently referred to similar conversions. Theodosius I supposedly gave one out of three temples on the acropolis of Constantinople to the Church, whereas one other was made into a ‘gaming room for dice players’ and a third into a carriage house for the Praetorian Prefect (Mal. *Chronographia* 345). Libanius further recommended Theodosius I to turn temples into tax collection offices.¹⁶ The Museion at the writer’s hometown of Antioch became a school; the city’s temple of Dionysios was turned into a courtroom; the temple of Athena lived on as a lawyers’ meeting place; and an unknown temple was converted into a private residence (respectively Lib. *Or.* 1.102, Lib. *Or.* 45.26, Lib. *Ep.* 847 and Lib. *Ep.* 1364.7). The Tychaion of Alexandria may have been turned into a tavern by the later 4th century (Palladas *Anthol. Gr.* 9.180–183; Bowra 1960). Whether or not these examples are all authentic, their mention in literary sources implies that such conversions for secular purposes would not have been conceived as improbable by contemporaries.

There is another manner of reuse which is particularly interesting for gaining insight into the motives behind temple preservation. In a well-known law issued in 382, it was stipulated that “the temple shall continually be open ... in which images are reported to have been placed which must be measured by the value of their art rather than by their divinity ...” (*Cod. Theod.* 16.10.8). In this particular case, the temple functioned as a sort of museum for statues, which, just as the building itself, must have been deconsecrated. Even if this practice was recurrent, the chances of recovering material evidence are very small. Attitudes towards pagan statuary probably hardened throughout the 5th and especially during the 6th century (Jacobs 2010, 288, 292). Even if some temples were kept open with statues on display in the later 4th century, they were likely to have been removed or destroyed at a later moment in time. I know of only one example, the above-mentioned Tychaion of Alexandria, where at least part of the statuary was still intact as late as 602.¹⁷

On the whole, even though the reuse of temple cellae was more varied and far more frequent than current archaeological sources would lead one to suspect, sources mentioning such reuse are largely limited to the second half of the 4th century. It seems rather likely that a new secular function, though ensuring the immediate survival of the temple, would seldom guarantee a long-term preservation. There appears to have been one exception to this rule, however. If we look at the temples which remained virtually intact throughout the centuries, it is remarkable that they were typically located in very prominent locations within the city. This easily leads to the assumption that they were valued for reasons similar to those alluded

to in the law mentioned above: because they, like the deconsecrated statues, were “measured by the value of their art”, in this case because they functioned as decorative and monumental landmarks. In Asia Minor, the most conspicuous example was the so-called Temple of Hadrian at Ephesos, a simple *prostylos in antis* temple that was facing the Embolos, the centre of the late antique city. It was extensively rebuilt, possibly around 300, and repaired by a Christian sponsor at least once more between 383 and 393. The late restoration and permanent preservation of a temple so far into the 4th century may have been aided by a redefined role in the celebration of both Christian emperors and city founders (Bayliss 2004, 61). This is suggested by the fact that the late restorations also entailed the application of a frieze displaying myths of the city’s founding in the *pronaos*, or at least that of a relief said to feature Theodosius I in the company of not just his family, but also Olympian gods (Plate 18).¹⁸ Similar motives may justify the preservation of the Tychaion on the Upper Agora of Sagalassos. This monument occupied an extremely visible position along the south side of the square. It was only a small building, so if one had wished to do so, dismantling would have been simple. Instead, the original statue that stood in the centre was removed and the statue base received a new dedication, first to Constantia, wife of Gratian, and later to Flavia Eudoxia, wife of the emperor Arcadius, whereas the two northern pedestals carried inscriptions mentioning the emperors Gratian and Valentinian II (Devijver and Waelkens 1995, 118–19, no. 5–6; Talloen and Waelkens 2004, 189–91; 2005, 246). At Side, the small temple of the regional god Men, consisting of a half-round cella on top of a high podium with a facade consisting of four columns, was recovered largely intact (Foss 1996, article no. 4: 39; Mansel 1963, 87–90). Although there is no information on the immediate surroundings of this temple or its importance in late antique Side, its position at the end of the colonnaded street crossing the entire city means that it was situated in a high-visibility surrounding. Finally, the facade of the Temple with the Round Cella at Skythopolis, situated at the junction of Palladius and Northwest Street and in the sightline of the last thoroughfare, was also preserved. Two of its huge columns stood upright until an earthquake in 749 destroyed most of the city, though the cella itself had been abandoned and dismantled presumably by the beginning of the 5th century (Tsafrir 2003, 279–81). At least half of these examples were situated on central locations where other large-scale infrastructure works are known to have been carried out in or after the late 4th century.¹⁹ In the course of such works, attention must have been drawn to the temples as well; the fact that they were preserved can unambiguously be considered a conscious choice of the

civic authorities.

Although such preserved temples and shrines were generally rather small in size, there are some large-scale examples. Thus, the upper cella of the Temple of Zeus at Gerasa remained present in the urban landscape (Plate 19). In the 3rd and 4th century, the lower terrace of the sanctuary was already in use for industrial purposes. By the early 5th century, the lower cella had been torn down, but the larger temple on the higher terrace survived.²⁰ When walking over the *Cardo* from the north, this temple is still located at the end of the vista even today. This was, in all likelihood, essential for its preservation.

Dismantlement and visual maintenance of the city

Let us now look at what happened to the temples in city centres which could not be preserved and were instead torn down. By 400, many temples were in the process of dismantlement, especially at Ephesos. At the same time, there was also a great deal of reconstruction work going on elsewhere in the city. Thus, building elements from the city's Artemision were found in the Harbour Baths. Blocks of its *temenos* wall were abundantly used in the construction of the Church of St. Mary and its associated "bishop's palace" in the late 420s or early 430s. The altar of the Artemision and the surrounding colonnade, together with its pediment, were apparently demolished, sold and reused in the area of the Basilica of St. John (for the redistribution of building elements of the Temple of Artemis, see Foss 1979, 86–87; Bammer and Muss 1996, 60). Likewise, the dismantling of the large Temple of the Sebastoi began before the end of the 4th century at least,²¹ as did that of the Olympieion (Scherrer 2000, 184). The much smaller Temple for Divus Julius and Roma on the State Agora and the so-called "Felsspalttempel" were also presumably taken apart in contemporary operations (for the Temple for Divus Julius and Roma, see Scherrer 1995, 19; for the "Felsspalttempel", Thür 2003, 262). The widespread dismantling of temples at Ephesos was very likely the result of their ruinous condition after the earthquakes of the second half of the 4th century (358, 365 and 368), not that of a homogeneous Christian population (Limberis 1999). Although this phenomenon is the most widespread at Ephesos, it can also be seen elsewhere. For instance, a major earthquake with drastic consequences hit Skythopolis in 363 (Tsafirir 2003, 278), and at Hierapolis many buildings were also damaged by an earthquake at the end of the 4th century (D'Andria 2001, 111; 2003, 37). As at Ephesos, existing monuments, including many temple complexes, suffered considerable damage. When large-scale renovation campaigns were finally

initiated, the dismantling of temple buildings would have killed two birds with one stone. First, temple ruins could be made to disappear, albeit slowly. Indeed, the religious climate had already changed so much by then that repairs to pagan monuments were no longer sought-after, not by the local citizens – even though many of them were still pagan – and not by the Christian emperor or authorities. Secondly, the derelict temples delivered the building elements necessary for other ongoing public works in the city.

This process could be fairly rapid, especially when the temples were small in size, such as the temple on the State Agora at Ephesos. Conversely, larger temples, for instance the Artemision in the same city, could take several decades, even centuries, to dismantle. Large temples often resulted in the prolonged presence of a ruin and/or stone quarry. The entire temple *temenos* was often transformed in an artisanal quarter with activities directly related to the quarrying of the stone, such as stone cutting and lime burning, as well as others, such as ceramic production. At peripheral complexes, such as the Temple of Artemis at Ephesos, the derelict nature of the site was probably less blatant. In city centres, one chose to physically cut off these areas from the monumental urban framework, either by preserving or restoring an existing physical border or by constructing a new visual boundary.²²

The preservation of part of the *temenos* enclosure, and especially its *propylaea*, was quite common. At Ephesos, the entrance staircase of the Temple of the Sebastoi remained untouched, even though the *temenos* area was being dismantled by the end of the 4th century. As a consequence, the area would not have been visible for passers-by in the Embolos or Domitian Street, as the facades of the buildings along these streets would have taken up their attention. Similarly, though activities of a more humble nature may have been taking place at the Temple of Zeus at Gerasa (Rasson and Seigne 1989, 119–21; Seigne 1989, 48), the staircase of the complex as well as its propylon hid them from view. The most spectacular example could be found at the Temple of Artemis at Gerasa. Although this huge complex served as a stone quarry for most churches in town most likely already from the late 4th, early 5th century onwards (Brenk 2003, 1–17), the entrance complex remained unchanged until the end of Antiquity (Plate 20). For passers-by, the appearance of the area would have remained more or less the same. In some cases, newly constructed buildings effectively closed off the less attractive areas. For instance, the spoliation and artisanal activities that went on for more than a century at the former Olympieion of Ephesos went unnoticed because of the insertion of the Church of St. Mary in the southern *stoa* of the *temenos* (Scherrer 2000, 184 for artisanal activities; Jacobs 2013,

304). The Apollo Temple at Hierapolis was quarried away almost completely, but this too was hidden behind the Apollo Temple Nymphaeum, erected on top of its principal grand staircase (Jacobs 2013, 304).

This concealment of less exalted activities and ruins also extended to other derelict monuments and even to entire city quarters which were run-down. After the earthquakes at Ephesos in the 360s, initially only the Temple on the State Agora was deserted. For a short time, the square still played a part in civic life, as indicated by repairs carried out to the basilica-stoa of C. Sextilius Pollio (Alzinger 1972–1975, 295; Foss 1979, 82; Bauer 1996, 291). It soon lost its importance, which gave way to the dilapidation and dismantlement of buildings such as the Temple of Artemis and Augustus, the Prytaneion and the Rhodian Peristyle to the north of the square as well as the nymphaeum along its western side. Conversely, the agglutinating nymphaeum turned towards the lively Square of Domitian and the new heart of the city, the Embolos, was repaired. The result of these targeted operations was that the derelict state of the so-called State Agora, the former heart of the city, would only have been noticed by visitors to the extended residential area on the slopes of Panayirdağ.²³

These less visible locations were not only dismantled or left in ruins, but were often also redeveloped into new residential and artisanal quarters. As in the previous examples, such changes remained hidden from view. The Halls of Verulanus and the Harbour Gymnasium at Ephesos were not repaired in the late 4th century, in sharp contrast to the Harbour Baths. The city quarter was redeveloped as a residential area. This was not visible from the Arkadiane because the back walls of the porticoes were still standing. Similarly, the dismantling of the agora of Hierapolis and its subsequent adaptation into an artisanal quarter comprising a marble quarry, lime-production units and ceramic workshops took place behind the colonnades of Frontinus Street (Jacobs 2009a, 207–8).

Although this article focuses primarily on the cities of Asia Minor, analogous, often large-scale operations hiding the dilapidation of temples, other public monuments or even entire areas are known in almost all provinces of the Roman Empire. For instance, after its destruction in the 360s, the Basilica of Skythopolis was not reconstructed (Tsafrir and Foerster 1997, 115–16, 122). Moreover, the area appears to have been used as a dump for earthquake debris derived from elsewhere. This situation lasted until the mid-5th century, when the Byzantine Agora was laid out (Tsafrir and Foerster 1997: 122–23; Mazor and Bar-Nathan 1998, 17–18). It is likely that this also remained largely hidden from passers-by (Plate 21). The decorative monuments to the north were reconstructed. In the east,

the ruins disappeared behind the East Bathhouse (Tsafrir and Foerster 1997, 98, 113; Mazor and Bar-Nathan 1998, 11–14). In the west, Palladius Street was laid out in the late 4th century (cf. *supra*). The situation in the south is less known. Initially, the area had been occupied by an elaborate cult complex which suffered the same fate as the basilica (Tsafrir and Foerster 1997, 109). Maybe its ruins were hidden from the view of people passing on the street in front of the theatre by means of a simple wall structure. Further, at the Forum of Sabratha in Tripolitania, a 4th century portico was constructed to hide the damaged East Forum Temple (Sears 2011, 245 with bibliography). In the western half of the Empire, the ruinous condition of some of Ostia's city quarters was from the 4th century onwards consistently hidden from view for passers-by on the Decumanus by the addition of small but decorative fountains, new porticoes, civic plaza's, propyla and so on (Gering 2004). Even at the Forum Romanum in Rome, comparable measures were taken to hide the collapsed interior of the Basilica Aemilia to the north of the square. The monument was no longer used and was probably even spoliated after its destruction in 410. To the north and east side, this stayed hidden behind the walls of the Forum of Nerva and that of the Templum Pacis. The facade facing the forum was restored fairly quickly, probably before 420. On its western side, however, the collapsed interior was hidden behind a new brick wall provided with niches for statuary. Franz Alto Bauer very appropriately used the term "Kulisse" for these reconstructions (for changes to the Forum Romanum after 410, see Bauer 1996, 110; 2001a, 84; Machado 2006, 174–79, esp. 174–75; for "Kulisse", see Bauer 2001a, 84).

Temples, the urban landscape and civic pride

There were certain structures that any self-respecting Roman city simply could not do without. First and foremost, these were: an adequate street network and a standard arsenal of public buildings. Streets remained vital for providing large numbers of people with a smooth passage from one place to another even in the late Roman and early Byzantine periods. In addition, fortification systems were apparently required to give city dwellers an augmented feel of security from the later 4th century onwards (Jacobs 2013, 25–28). On the other hand, the relevance of traditional monuments dwindled at various speeds throughout Late Antiquity. Temples were the first to lose their function and become redundant. However, as shown earlier, they did not disappear from the cityscape; far from it. In this section, I will argue that their survival was the result of the combination of

pragmatic reasoning and civic pride.

As stated, once a temple was deserted, there were three possible courses of action. One could opt for letting the temple fall into ruin, initiate a complete conversion of the monument, or actively begin dismantling the temple and reuse its building materials – either at the same site or elsewhere. From an economic point of view, the first option was the least profitable, as one would have wasted a valuable building plot. The second and third options were certainly more attractive than the first in terms of aesthetic maintenance. If a site in the centre of a city became available, it was no doubt profitable to give it a new destination, whereby it also ensured the greatest possible visual continuance. The third option, dismantlement, required a significant investment of manpower and funds. Temple dismantling therefore invariably needed a market – in other words, new building projects – in order to become profitable.

New construction, as previously stated, was rare in Late Antiquity. It was largely limited to churches and fortification walls. Although a fair amount of temple materials may have found their way into the new defensive circuits of cities,²⁴ sources on this are few for cities in Asia Minor in the late 4th and early 5th century. We are better informed on the reuse of temple parts in church construction. Although the majority of churches would only appear from the mid-5th century onwards, quite a few cities already had their first monumental church building built in earlier decades. Thus, the construction of a church on the site of the temple of Apollo Klarios at Sagalassos, consisting of reused materials from the temple, has recently been re-dated to the first half of the 5th century (Jacobs, Demarsin, and Waelkens forthcoming). Likewise, the cathedral at Gerasa was built during the first half of the 5th century reusing building materials belonging to a disused temple on the same location (Brenk *et al.* 2006, 262–64). By 431, the Church of St. Mary at Ephesos had been established in the southern portico of the Olympieion (Karwiese *et al.* 1997, 13–14). Characteristically, these churches were often located on highly conspicuous locations. As explained above, the Apollo Klarios hill was visible from nearly everywhere in town as well as to all visitors approaching the city. The Cathedral at Gerasa is located along the city's *Cardo*, just alongside the Artemision, and moreover, the entrance complex of the church rivals that of the older temple, which had always remained standing. At Ephesos, the accessibility of the Church of Mary was augmented by a colonnaded street connecting the site directly to the then recently renovated Arkadiane (Jacobs 2013, 324).

By the late 4th century, when the problem of deserted temples and, thus, their impending decay became acute, bishops had often already

obtained important positions in local government. Their proposals to use these sites and buildings, or at least their building materials, for Christian purposes must have been an ideal solution for all parties involved. The Church itself gained a building or building plot in the very centre of the city. As stated, by the 3rd century, city centres had often been completely developed and construction activities temporarily halted. By the time church construction started, one would have been forced to move to the outskirts of town, if it were not for the fact that deserted temples sites had become available again. Thus, a possible fear of demons frequently had to succumb to a desire to usurp these favourable locations. Churches established or erected on such spots would have had great visual impact, much like the temples of the past, and thus confirmed the supremacy of the Christian religion.

That high-visibility was considered an important prerequisite is confirmed by the scenographic locations of newly constructed Christian cult buildings. As such, the Church of St. John at Ephesos was constructed on top of Ayasoluk Hill between 390 and 420. The hill was visible to over land visitors as well as for visitors travelling over sea (for the early 5th-century church of St. John, see Krautheimer 1986, 106–7; Ladstätter and Pülz 2007, 414). The late 4th or early 5th century Martyrion of St. Philip at Hierapolis was also built in a comparable position on a high plateau above the city (De Bernardi 2002, 157). Moreover, the monument possessed two porticoes, one which provided an overview of the city and the other from which the surrounding landscape could be admired. Conversely, the Hagia Sophia at Constantinople was laid out in a slight dip between two low hills and may not have been located in the axis of the Mese, but was instead intended to be highly visible from the sea (Buchwald 2007, 65–66).

These scenographic locations of newly constructed Christian cult buildings did not only benefit the Church; they were also advantageous to the city as a whole. As had been the case in previous centuries, civic pride in Late Antiquity entailed the reception of visitors of all kinds, including visiting officials, against an adequate architectural background (for descriptions of the beauty of the city in speeches of arrival or departure, see Saradi 1995, 39). The desire to boast the beauty of the city influenced the appearance of all thoroughfares and monuments that outsiders might pass.²⁵ As already explained, the construction of fortifications again flourished during the Theodosian period. Even though walls were not all built with the same funds or skills, the city gates were invariably constructed with care and further embellished with architectural and/or figurative decoration (Jacobs 2009b; 2013, 60–93). From that point on, visitors

passed over well-maintained streets and agoras where statues from the past were joined by relocated items taken from elsewhere in the city, or sometimes even by newly carved items.²⁶ In Late Antiquity, all possible decorative monuments – fountains, arches, columnar monuments and so on – were actively maintained, their number was even increased by new additions.²⁷ At the same time, one was also careful to preserve portico back walls and *propylaea* alongside the main streets and squares so that the dilapidation of temple domains would stay hidden. Temples without *temenos* walls or temple cellae located on heights would either be preserved and turned to new uses or, alternatively, would be redeveloped as soon as possible.

Therefore, the eventual outcome of the processes of conversion, dismantling and new construction as described in this article surpasses the interests of subgroups in society. Their combined effect ensured that the city maintained an adequate appearance at all times, even in an era of profound changes, such as the later 4th century. Indeed, the care for and energy invested in temples and temple facades implies the continued presence of a civic and imperial elite who understood the value and potential of the civic landscape. They consciously used all monumental components of their architectural surroundings to impress both local inhabitants and foreign visitors, to fulfil not only personal, but also communal aspirations, and to express the identity, splendour and wealth of the city as a whole.

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1 An extensive overview of the multiple construction and renovation operations in Asia Minor in this period is provided in Jacobs 2012.

2 Price 1984, 59 and Beard *et al.* 1998, 387 for the abolishment of traditional festivals due to reduced resources. See also Saradi-Mendelovici 1990, 50 for literary sources on abandonment and natural decay. In earlier centuries as well, there must have been decaying sanctuaries, as cults sometimes lost their appeal in favour of others. Pausanias, for instance, already mentioned innumerable examples of dilapidated and ill-maintained temples. In the course of the 4th century, however, the scale of the phenomenon changed drastically.

3 Many of these texts were collected in Caseau 2001a, 86–103 and more recently Saradi 2008.

4 For the Temple of Marnas at Gaza, see Trombley 1993, 207–22; for the Serapeion and other temples in Alexandria in 391, see Trombley 1993, 129–36; Haas 1997, 162–63.

5 Jacobs 2010, 291; Fowden 1978 discusses the involvement of diverse functionaries and bishops in temple closures. Monks are often blamed for violent destructions of monuments during riots as well, see Festugière 1959, 237–39; Fowden 1978, 67–69; Foss 1979, 17; Brown 1992, 71–74.

6 An overview of laws related to pagan cult and cult buildings can be found in Cantino Wataghin 1999, 741–49, table 2. In 399, Arcadius and Honorius ordered the destruction of a rural temple (*Cod. Theod.* 16.10.16).

7 *Cod. Theod.* 16.10.18 (399); 16.10.19 (407/8). Physical remnants of deconsecration are mostly limited to the carving of Christian symbols on temple floors and walls and the lack of pagan statuary within these sacred areas.

8 This evidence is summarized in Saradi-Mendelovici 1990, 52. The appreciation

for temples had still not disappeared by the early 6th century, when Theodoric granted individuals ruined temple buildings on the condition that they would renovate them (*Var.* 2.7, 3.29, 4.24, 20. Cassiodorus (*Var.* 3.31) also deplored the dismantling of Rome's temples.

9 Men Askaenos near Pisidian Antioch: description in Mitchell and Waelkens 1998, 85–86. The Red Hall, or the Temple of the Egyptian Gods, at Pergamon was destroyed by fire in the late 4th or the early 5th century, though the exact cause of the fire remains unknown (Nohlen 1998, 99). Outside Asia Minor, archaeologically attested attacks on temples are somewhat more numerous, e.g., for Narona in modern Croatia, see Marin 2001, for Eretria in Greece, see Schmid 2001. For the difficulties in establishing a date and cause of destruction, see, for instance, Slane 2008 on the Temple of Demeter and Kore in Corinth.

10 For instance, after the Artemision at Ephesos had been plundered by the Goths in 262, the cella was only haphazardly restored and paved, probably during the reign of Diocletian, with materials taken from other ruined parts of the complex (Bammer and Muss 1996, 60–61). In the 350s, the temple was already used as a quarry for renovation of the Harbour Baths (Foss 1979, 86–87). The Artemision had always remained outside the centre of Ephesos. The Temple of Artemis at Sardis occupied a similar position. Parts of the complex were already dilapidated and removed during the first half of the 4th century (Foss 1976, 48, 50; Hanfmann and Buchwald 1983, 193). By the 4th century, the extra-urban Letoon at Xanthos had also lost much of its former grandeur (Le Roy 1991, 351; Caseau 2001b, 25). Besides their implantation outside the city centres proper, it is probably not coincidental that these examples belonged to the most extensive sanctuaries of the classical world, which were very likely the most vulnerable to a decline in resources.

11 See for example Cassiod. *Var.* 7.44, translation and commentary in Fauvinet-Ranson 2006, 174–76. In 401, it was again proclaimed that “property” which was “fit for neither the use nor the adornment of the municipality” could be privatised (*Cod. Theod.* 15.1.41).

12 In a law of 435 (*Cod. Theod.* 16.10.25), Theodosius acknowledged that many temples probably no longer survived intact. When temples and other public buildings gained more stringent protection with stricter penalties attached some 25 years later, in 458 (*Nov. Maj.* 4), this assumingly pertained to functioning, or at least to structurally sound, public monuments.

13 Some 4th-century restorations to temples are also known from the West (Lavan 2006, 231) and from North-Africa (Sears 2011).

14 Naumann 1979, 76–77; Rheidt 2003, 244. The early date of conversion has been contradicted by Niewöhner (2007, 74, 153–55). All such low-profile conversions of temple cellae mentioned by Bayliss (2004, 36–43, 57) were dated after the middle of the 5th century.

15 Loots *et al.* 2000, 614, 619–25. A similar integration of a temple into a fortification wall is known from Isriye in Syria (Gogräfe 1999; Bayliss 2004, 62, n. 51).

16 Lib. *Or.* 30.42. Extra-urban temples could, according to Libanius (*Or.* 30.44), still be useful as military bulwarks.

17 Theophylact Simocatta, *Historiae* VIII 13.10, discussed in McKenzie 2007, 67. The statues mentioned – Tyche, Gaia, and Nikes, as well as Alexandria's royal dynasty going back to Alexander the Great – were rather neutral in their iconography. The survival of the statuary makes the abovementioned claim of Palladas doubtful, but not impossible.

18 Miltner 1958, 104–6; 1959, 264–73; Hueber 1997, 53, 86–88; Outschar 1999, 447; Thür 1999, 116–17; Ladstätter and Pülz 2007, 403. The relief with the imperial family is probably to be dated between 383, when Arcadius became Augustus, and

393, when Honorius, who is not depicted here, also became Augustus. The date of the other reliefs is contested: initially, they were dated stylistically to the first half of the 3rd century by Saporiti (1964). Brenk (1968) and Laubscher (1985) put them in the Tetrarchic period, though Bauer (1996, 284–85, n. 86) and Feissel (1999, 28, n. 12) redated all the reliefs to the Theodosian period.

19 Thus, the Embolos at Ephesos was undergoing major renovation works in the later 4th century (Thür 1999, esp. 106; Ladstätter and Pülz 2007, 403 with further references). Soundings underneath the pavement of Palladius Street have indicated that its present form was laid out in the late 4th century (Mazor 1987–1988, 22–23; Foerster and Tsafirir 1988–1989, 17–18; Tsafirir and Foerster 1997, 114; Mazor and Bar-Nathan 1998, 15–16). The exact chronology of the colonnaded street at Side remains poorly researched. Finally, at the Upper Agora at Sagalassos, many traces were erased by later 5th and 6th century interventions (Jacobs 2011, 77).

20 Rasson and Seigne 1989, 119–21; Seigne 1989, 48. The fact that the building was never completed, and thus probably never served any cult purposes, may have been an additional encouragement for its preservation.

21 Its building components have, amongst others, been found at the Tetragonos Agora, see Foss 1979, 78; Scherrer 1995, 19–20.

22 At Ostia, where a substantial part of the city plan has been uncovered, the extent of this phenomenon can be fully appreciated. See Gering 2004 for a detailed overview of the mostly 4th-century adjustments intended to preserve the representational nature of the city centre.

23 For the Temple of Artemis and Augustus, see Eichler 1961, 68; Vettters 1972, 3, fig. 1; Alzinger 1972–1975, 295–99; Foss 1979, 80; 1977, 473; for the conversion of the prytaneion, Eichler 1961, 68; Alzinger 1970, 1647; 1972–1975, 248–49; for the later history of the nymphaea, Miltner 1959, 35–37; Scherrer 2000, 90; for structures found on the agora itself, Eichler 1965, 96–97; Vettters 1972, 3, fig. 1.

24 One of the more famous examples is the Poseidon Temple at Isthmia that was integrated into the Hexamilion Wall and the Fortress at Isthmia, built from 408 onwards, see Gregory 1993; Kardulias 2005.

25 The route taken is mirrored in the pathway followed during an *adventus*, when the city was visited by the provincial governor or, more rarely, by the emperor himself. The reception of such officials took place according to a predetermined schedule: they would be greeted by a delegation while approaching the city, while local magistrates and a carefully lined up crowd awaited their arrival outside the city gate. From there on, city dwellers no doubt accompanied them over a main colonnaded thoroughfare to the city centre, where they would listen to laudatory speeches. Their departure followed a reversed sequence (Slootjes 2006, 106–10).

26 I have argued at length elsewhere that civic pride and the desire to preserve the urban landscape was a vital factor in the preservation of pagan and mythological statues (Jacobs 2010, esp. 289–90).

27 Jacobs 2013, Chapter 3; Jacobs and Richard 2012 for fountains added to the urban landscape in Late Antiquity.

TRIUMPHAL ARCHES AND GATES OF PIETY AT CONSTANTINOPLE, RAVENNA, AND ROME

Simon Malmberg

This contribution will explore how emperors could exploit the symbolic potential of palace and city gates as highly visible locations for the display of programmes in art, text and architecture, and will try to elucidate the reasons and impact of these images. It will further look at the growing martyr cult beyond the city gates, and specifically how the cults of Laurence and Stephen were related to imperial patronage, relic translations, and ideology. The contribution will also investigate the physical links between these saintly shrines, city gates and imperial residences.

“Elegant Façade of the Empire”

In 730, Emperor Leo sent a soldier to remove the image of Christ displayed above the main gate to the palace at Constantinople, the Chalke (Fig. 9.1). However, when trying to perform his task he was knocked from his ladder to the ground and killed by, what our source calls “a group of honourable women”. These women then tried to lynch the city’s bishop, accusing him for giving the order to remove the image. Eventually, the emperor stepped in and restored order through a massacre of the female “martyrs” (*Vita S. Stephani Iunioris*, written c. 807, PG 100. 1085C; Auzépy 1997, 100–1, 193–94).¹ Almost sixty years later, Empress Eirene commemorated the event with an inscription above the restored image that said “That which the emperor Leo took down, Eirene restored here”. The most fascinating aspect of this story of destruction and renewal is that the

Saviour's sign placed above his own head, and the hostile and inimical beast, which had laid siege to the Church of God through the tyranny of the godless, he made in the form of a dragon borne down to the deep. For the oracles proclaimed him a 'dragon' and a 'crooked serpent' in the books of the prophets of God. Therefore the Emperor also showed to all, through the medium of the encaustic painting, the dragon under his own feet and those of his sons, pierced through the middle of the body with a javelin, and thrust down in the depths of the sea" (Vita Constantini 3.3.1–2, trans. Cameron and Hall 1999).²

This image shows many things simultaneously: the emperor as pious, defending the true faith, but also as victorious in war, under the protection of the supreme god, inaugurating a new era of peace through the defeat over the enemy in the depths of the sea, probably referring to the naval victory over Emperor Licinius. Furthermore, Constantine is depicted together with his sons, suggesting a dynastic content as well. To place these symbolic images on the façade of a palace, and especially at the main gate, was a convenient way both to reach as large an audience as possible (as Eusebius also points out), and, through its charged location, to make the most lasting impact.

However, the image put up by Constantine should not be confused with the Chalke. The Chalke was probably not constructed until the time of Emperor Anastasius in c. 498, as the palace had only by that time come to extend as far north as the Augusteum square, as argued by Berger (1987, 11–12; 1988, 243; see also Mango 1959; Bardill 2006, 7–23).³ The dedicatory inscription on the new palace gate has happened to come down to us, and it says:

"On the house called Chalke in the palace, which was built by the emperor Anastasius. I am the house of Anastasius, the tyrannicide emperor, and alone I surpass by far all the cities of the world... [There follows a comparison with the wonders of the ancient world, among them the Capitoline temple] My emperor himself, after his victorious annihilation of the Isaurians, completed me, the shrine of dawn, resplendent with gold, fronting on all sides the breezes of the four winds" (Anthologia Graeca 9.656, trans. Mango 1959, 26).⁴

The victory over the Isaurians, who were led by Emperor Zeno's brother Longinus, was celebrated in 498 with a triumphal entry and chariot games at Constantinople, with the climax being Longinus and Indes, the surviving leaders, or "tyrants", of the revolt, prostrating themselves before Anastasius in the imperial box at the hippodrome. The scene was described by Priscian:

“This very place rightly displayed trophies to you and offered to view the fettered and defeated tyrants who were driven to you feet in the middle of the circus spectacles. Once in the same manner while the Latin people watched Aemilius Paulus, that bravest of men, riding in his chariot dragged King Perses to the Tarpeian citadel and placated the lord of the Capitoline temples. But it was all powerful God who beheld you from the citadel of the heavens as you placated the divine majesty of Him who rules over the celestial temples” (Priscian, *De laude Anastasii imperatoris* 171–79, trans. Coyne 1988).⁵

Note that the Capitoline is mentioned as a comparison in both Priscian and the inscription on the Chalke, as a standard triumphal trope, but also in reference to the golden roof of both buildings. Paulus offers his thanks to Jove on the Capitoline, Anastasius to the omnipotent God. At the end, Priscian contrasts the Capitoline citadel and temple with God’s celestial temple and heavenly citadel, and stresses God’s protection of Anastasius (Coyne 1988, 168). The Christian symbolism on the Chalke became overtly expressed later on, when Justinian erected a cross over the entrance (*Parastaseis* 44a).

Again, we see how the impressive gate and its inscription emphasises imperial power and splendour (such as gold, the imperial light, and comparison with other wonders, including the Capitolium in Rome), and also victory in war, while the four winds refer to the vast extent of the empire. These traditional messages were also beginning to be complemented and imbued by a new Christian sentiment, of an emperor and Empire under the protection of God.

Unfortunately, we cannot say anything further about its decoration, as the first Chalke was destroyed already in 532 during the Nika Revolt. We know much more about its successor, built by Justinian and decorated after the successful conquest of the Vandal and Ostrogothic kingdoms in 540. Procopius gives us a detailed description of the gate’s interior, which had a rectangular form and was covered by a central dome. Floors and walls were covered in coloured marble, while the ceiling was decorated with mosaics showing victories in Africa and Italy, and Belisarius bringing the spoils before the emperor. In the centre of the dome were the images of Justinian and Theodora, surrounded by the Roman Senate, celebrating the victories over the Vandals and Goths, who approached them as prisoners of war (Procopius, *De aedificiis* 1.10.12–15; Mango 1959, 30–34). Again, we see an emphasis on splendour, military victory, benefits of imperial rule, and the consensus displayed by the Senate, confirming the legitimacy of the emperor.

We are also fortunate to know a lot about the exterior decoration of

the Chalke, primarily through the *Parastaseis syntomoi chronikai* of the late 8th century. In the gate area there were statues of several emperors and empresses: Maximian, the whole house of Theodosius the Spaniard, Empress Pulcheria, Emperor Zeno with his wife Ariadne on pillars. On the gate itself were displayed statues of Justin I with seven relatives, Tiberius, a gilded statue of Belisarius with a crown of rays and two philosophers (*Parastaseis* 32, 33, 44a, 77–78, 80; Cameron and Herrin 1984; Ševčenko 1992).⁶ This is quite an impressive list, or in the words of Bassett, “a historic imperial court” (2004, 127; see also Berger 1988, 247–48; Bauer 1996, 165; Brubaker 1999, 265). Apart from a few pieces, like four gorgon heads, which probably had an apotropaic function (*Parastaseis* 78; Cameron and Herrin 1984, 158–59; Bassett 2004, 186; see also Engemann 1975, 35–36; Niewöhner 2011, 115), there are no antiquities displayed, which narrows the focus to dynastic messages and current politics. We can note that on the gate itself there were only imperial statues of the house of Justin, and this passage from the *Parastaseis* merits to be quoted in full:

“In the same place [the Chalke] is also a cross put up in the time of the earlier Justinian; restored/reused <statues> of Belisarius <and others> were also set up. And on the gate Belisarius himself is to be seen gilded, with a crown of rays, and Tiberius the Thracian, with a hunched back, and Justin the First, slender in appearance, and very close to his real likeness; and seven relatives, some in marble and some in bronze, who can be accurately recognised by passers-by from their dress” (*Parastaseis* 44a, trans. Cameron and Herrin 120–21, 232–35).⁷

Concerning the puzzling Belisarius image, we know that Constantine was the last known emperor to have worn a crown of rays, so this may be a statue of him rather than a general (Mango 1959, 101; Berger 1988, 248, n. 64; Bassett 2004, 126, 186).⁸ That the statues had to be recognised from their dress seem to indicate that they were not accompanied by identifying inscriptions, and could thus easily have been misidentified by the late 8th century. A possible reconstruction of the layout would locate the image of Constantine directly above the bronze gates, flanked by members of the house of Justin (Mango 1959, 103–4 consider statuary on the facade of the Chalke quite likely, with the statues probably arranged in niches above a central doorway).

The literary sources can now be supplemented by archaeological discoveries made in the garden of the former Sultanahmet Prison. In 2003, excavation uncovered a monumental gate-building facing the Augusteum, which was identified as the Chalke. Three steps in marble

lead from the square to a platform on which clamp holes with circular traces indicated the presence of columns without bases. This portico fronted a gate-building faced with marble. It had a 6.2 m wide entrance flanked by broad pilasters, in which were niches probably used for statuary display (Girgin 2010; Denker 2010; 2013).⁹

Something might be felt to be missing from the evidence provided by the *Parastaseis*. Where is the famous image of Christ, prominently displayed at the Chalke? Actually, there are no descriptions of this image before 807, when it had a central role in the story mentioned earlier. The 10th-century *Patria* repeats the description found in the 8th-century *Parastaseis*, of statues displayed at the Chalke, but with a significant addition:

*“The statue of Maurice and his wife and children at the Chalke stands above the icon of Jesus Christ represented as God and man, for they were put up by him” (Patria 2.28 = Parastaseis 5b).*¹⁰

This addition is only a small part of a large panoply of legends that began to develop from the 9th century onwards about the image of Christ Chalkites. Without delving further into this complex debate, we may see this as an example of how important images could be when displayed prominently at gates. The Chalke had always been a physical marker of a transitional space between emperor and people, and it would become a natural “bulletin board” for political statements and changes in imperial policy (Brubaker 1999, 259–60). Around 800 the idea of iconoclasm had centred on the Chalke, as a political and religious focal point in the city and the empire. So it became natural for Eirene to make a statement there by placing the famous icon of Christ above the gate, inverting the mythical symbol of iconoclasm, the destruction that had probably never taken place (Auzépy 1990. For reservations against Auzépy, see Mentzou Meimaris 1993; see also Mango 1959, 115, 142–48; Brubaker 1999, 261–64). Eirene’s action was an unambiguous statement, that imperial policy had been transformed.

Another example of the Chalke as a symbolic, but also transitional space is the story told by John of Antioch in the early 7th century about Emperor Maurice. In a dream, Maurice found himself standing at the Chalke, where he had a vision of Christ. Christ told him that he could atone for his sins now, or later, in heaven. Maurice chose the former and abdicated by leaving the palace through the gate. The Chalke thus also became a metaphor for imperial change (John of Antioch 148; Mango 1959, 111; Wortley 1979; Brubaker 1999, 259–60, 266–67).¹¹

Golden Gates

The main gates of the walls of Constantinople constituted another charged location for the display of images (Fig. 9.2). The most famous gates were the two Golden Gates, in the Constantinian¹² and Theodosian walls respectively. The Golden Gate in the Constantinian wall is first mentioned in the *Notitia* of the 420s as the *Porta Aurea*. It was destroyed in an earthquake in 1509. The only description we have of the gate itself is provided by Manuel Chrysoloras in his *Letter Comparing Old and New Rome*, written in 1411. Chrysoloras describes the gate as one of the finest monuments of the city, and being so lofty that a full-rigged ship might pass through its portals. The gate was built in shining marble and crowned by a colonnade, and in front of the entrance was a column surmounted by a statue which might have depicted Constantine the Great.¹³ We also know that two statues, which fell down in an earthquake in 739/40, stood above the gate. The statues were said to represent Constantine the Great and a certain Atalus, after whom the gate was named by this time (Theophanes AM 6232). This was thus a lavishly decked out gate, built in costly and dazzling material, and decorated with both statuary and columns. It seems also to have been closely associated with Constantine the Great in later times, which might be corroborated by the existence of a pre-Theodosian columnar monument in front of the gate.

The Golden Gate in the Theodosian Wall is better known, and is still preserved, with its three large arches flanked by massive pylons clad in marble. It was crowned by a chariot, which was drawn by two (or perhaps four) elephants in bronze and mounted by a statue of Theodosius, accompanied by a *victoria* crowning the emperor together with the Tyche of Constantinople.¹⁴ There are still dowel holes from metal letters of two inscriptions in Latin that curved around both sides of the central arch, which allows the text to be reconstructed. The inner, eastern face, bore the inscription *Theodosius decorates this place after the death of the tyrant*, while the outer, western face, displayed the message *He who builds the gate with gold rules the golden age*.¹⁵ The emperor is often associated with the sun, as Theodosius I was in the inscription on the base of his statue in Forum Tauri, where he is said to be rising from the east like a second sun.¹⁶ Gold is also associated with the sun, and to see the rising sun through the archway of the Golden Gate, simultaneously with reading the gate's outer inscription mentioning gold and the golden age, would have made a strong impression on arrivals to the imperial city. Moreover, Theodosius II is said to have gilded the doors of the gate, thus giving it the name the Golden Gate (Malalas 197, first noted by Weigand 1914, and followed by Speck 1973; see also Dey 2010, 31). A large medallion above the interior face of the central passage still displays a prominent chi-rho

symbol, which can be considered to belong to the original construction of the gate (Strzygowski 1893, 14–5; Russo 2009, 16; Jacobs 2009, 204).



Fig. 9.2. Reconstruction of the Theodosian Golden Gate (courtesy of Tayfun Öner).

We see here a strong message of imperial might, victory and the emperor as protector of the city, coupled with promises of a future golden age of peace and prosperity. The Christian cross is also displayed prominently, as at the Chalke. Latin was, until the late 5th century, the default language of imperial monuments, associated with the emperor, court, army and legality, but would probably have been unintelligible to most local inhabitants. The text itself is thus directed primarily towards court and army, while the symbolic images and grandeur of construction contain a universal message.

The emperor is mentioned without titles, the lack of which makes it hard to know which Theodosius is meant. The imperial statue is identified as that of Theodosius I by Theophanes, the *Great Chronographer* and Kedrenos. However, the *Patria* identifies it as Theodosius II, and this generally unreliable source is in this instance indirectly supported by Malalas (Theophanes AM 6232; *Great Chronographer* 15.6–7; Kedrenos 1.567; *Patria* 1.66, 73, 2.58a; Malalas 197). Archaeologically, a structural bond has been confirmed between the gate and the flanking pylons (first suggested by Strzygowski 1893, 15–6 and confirmed by excavations in 1927: Macridy and Casson 1931, 69–70). The upper part of the pylons and the southern curtain wall did bond (Schneider and Meyer 1933, 1170–71; Meyer-Plath and Schneider 1943, 45–8), as did the lower part, which became accessible in 1959 (Duyuran 1959, 23). This has been interpreted as the gate and

wall being contemporary (Speck 1973, 142; Müller-Wiener 1977, 297–98; Berger 1988, 368; Russo 2009, 18–21). However, Bardill has argued that there is only scant evidence of bonding, and that the gate and wall were indeed built at different times (Bardill 1999, 677, 681; Mango 2000, 179, n. 45). It is still unresolved, however, if the gate preceded the wall, as Bardill argues, or postdated it, as has been suggested by Asutay-Effenberger (2007, 54–61).

The date for the building of the Theodosian wall has now been fixed to the years 404/5–413, including the outer wall (Socrates 7.1.3; Speck 1973, 136; Kalkan and Şahin 1994; Lebeck 1995; Bardill 2004, 122; Matthews 2012, 84). Epigraphic evidence tells us that the construction took nine years, the starting year being reached by counting backwards from 413. The weak point in the argument is the date of 413, which is based on a single passage, *Codex Theodosianus* 15.1.51, which begins: “The towers of the new wall, which has been constructed for the fortification of this most splendid city [Constantinople], shall, after the completion of the work ...” (*Turres novi muri, qui ad munitionem splendidissimae urbis extructis est, completo opere ...* Trans. Pharr 1952, 429).

Since the law is dated to 413 and mentions the new wall as built (*extructus est*), this has been taken to date the completion of the project to that year. However, the law goes on to say “after the completion of the work”, thus intimating that construction is still going on. Perhaps the curtain wall was finished by this date, but not all towers and fittings? Another possibility is that the building of the wall was prompted by the Hun invasion of the Balkans in 408, in which case the wall would be finished in 416 (originally suggested by Holum 1982, 89; see also Bardill 2004, 122, n. 9).

The date of the construction of the Theodosian Golden Gate has mainly been linked with two victory celebrations: the triumphal entry of Theodosius I into Constantinople in 391 after his victory over Emperor Maximus, and the celebrations after the overthrow of Emperor John in 425. If dated to 391, the gate would originally have been a freestanding triumphal arch flanked by massive pylons, built outside the city on the road to the imperial complex at Hebdomon, and only later incorporated into the wall. If built in 425, the original gate in the wall had had to be demolished, probably together with some parts of the adjoining curtain walls, to make room for the new structure.¹⁷

It can be fruitful to examine the evidence for the triumphs at Constantinople in 391 and 425. The two sources usually cited for the triumph over Maximus in 391 are Socrates (5.18), who only says that Theodosius and Honorius entered Constantinople on November 10 of that year, and Zosimus (4.50.1), who writes that Theodosius was

proud of his victory over Maximus when he entered Constantinople.¹⁸ Thus, although it is plausible that Theodosius indeed celebrated a triumph (or at least an *adventus*) in Constantinople in 391, we do not have any evidence for it. When John was defeated in 425, no triumphal celebration was held at Constantinople that we know of. Instead, on-going chariot races were interrupted, and Theodosius II organised a thanksgiving procession to church (Socrates 7.23). I would, however, like to consider a third possibility, which would link both Golden Gates to events in 416 as described by the *Chronicon Paschale*:

*“Theatrical celebrations were held by the urban prefect Ursus, to celebrate the victory against Attalus, in the month of Daisius, on the fourth day before Kalends of July [June 28], on a Wednesday. And chariot racing was also held for the same victory in the month of Panemus, on Nones of July [July 7]. And in the same year, the lord Theodosius the Younger entered Constantinople from Heraclea, in the month of Gorpiaeus, on the first day before Kalends of October [September 30], a Saturday, and was offered a golden crown at the Forum of Theodosius by the urban prefect Ursus and the Senate” (Chronicon Paschale s.a. 416).*¹⁹

It might be objected that Theodosius did not celebrate a proper triumph, but by this date “the distinction between a triumph and an *adventus* was rather blurred” (Mango 2000, 174).²⁰ Moreover, the *Chronicon Paschale* puts Theodosius’ *adventus* in direct relation to the victory celebrations. The collegiality of victory, i.e. that all legitimate emperors celebrated each other’s victories, has been clearly demonstrated for the late empire by McCormick, and in 416 Honorius celebrated an imperial triumph in Rome, where he had Attalus walk in front of his chariot.²¹ The normal route for victory celebrations and imperial entrances at Constantinople was from the Hebdomon, entering the city through both Golden Gates and ending at an imperial forum, the circus or the palace. This was probably the route chosen by Theodosius in 416, although it is also possible that he came by sea and entered via the Strategion. The forum where the emperor was received by prefect and senate could have been either of the three Theodosian fora then perhaps in existence, also known as those of Arcadius, Tauri, and part of the Strategion (Guilland 1959; Berger 1996; Bauer 1996, 212–13).²² Forum Tauri would probably present the most majestic setting for the ceremony, but that of Arcadius was more clearly associated with the emperor, since it was named after Theodosius II and not his grandfather. Be that as it may, the procession probably entered through the Golden Gates, which might

both have been upgraded at this time. As mentioned earlier, Theophanes describes the statues placed above the Golden Gate in the Constantinian wall:

“There also fell down the statue of Constantine the Great that stood above the gate of Atalos as well as that of Atalos himself, the statue of Arkadios that stood on the column of the Xerolophos, and the statue of Theodosius the Great above the Golden Gate; furthermore, the land walls of the City... “
(Theophanes AM 6232 (AD 739/40), trans. Mango and Scott 1997, 572).

From the topographical context, there is little doubt that the statues of Constantine and Atalus were placed on the Golden Gate in the Constantinian wall. The enigmatic figure of Atalus has been discussed by others, among them Mango, who comments that “the identity of Attalus is unclear. The only prominent person of that name in the period that concerns us, Priscus Attalus, was a usurper supported by the Visigoths, who would certainly not have been honoured at Constantinople. Indeed, his fall was celebrated by a theatre spectacle and chariot races” (2000, 175, n. 16). This is all true, but what if Theophanes, writing four centuries after the event, had gotten the identities of the statues mixed up? The gate might have received its statuary decoration in connection with the triumph over Attalus, so that several centuries later one of the statues, and the identity of the gate itself, had become intrinsically associated with a faded memory of the usurper, ironically giving his name to the monument of his defeat. The original identity of the two statues above the gate would then conceivably be the two triumphant emperors Honorius and Theodosius II, collegially sharing the honour of the victory.

As for the Golden Gate in the Theodosian wall, a construction date in 415–416 could solve many problems. The bulk of the gate would be completed about two years after the neighbouring curtain walls, but as we saw in the law of 413, many of the towers in the wall were probably not yet finished by that year (or, if we accept Holum’s suggestion, the gate and adjoining walls would in fact be contemporary). It would thus not require too large an adjustment to make space for the new gate. In fact, since it was located on the normal processional route towards the Hebdomon, it might have been planned as a monumental gate from the start, but its completion might have been delayed due to the decorations that were hurriedly added for the celebrations in 416.

So far, we have visited five different gates with many common characteristics. All were associated with military triumphs over tyrants: the palace gate of Constantine with the victory over Licinius

in 324, the Golden Gates with that over Attalus in 416, the Anastasian Chalke with the Isaurian triumph of 498, and that of Justinian with the triumph of 540. To display this message many traditional forms were used, such as a triumphal chariot, elephants, winged victories, emperors in military attire, proud inscriptions and conquered enemies. Military might was supplemented by other symbols, most importantly on a religious theme, where the use of gold, certain keywords and the *corona radiata* associated the emperor with the divine light. A new symbol, the cross, had also entered imperial imagery, and often received a prominent position above the entrance. Together, the gates displayed a powerful combination of military victory and divine protection, which made the imperial presence felt throughout the city.

Gates of the Martyrs

Gates were not only symbols of male virtues like military victory and divine protection in war, but could also be associated with piety and devotion, as practiced also by female members of the upper echelons of society. Christian piety had become an important way for female members of the imperial family to gain status and participate in public life. Two important ways to show public piety, combined with traditional euergetism, were the building of churches and the translation and deposition of relics at these sanctuaries (Brown 1981, 33, 38; Holum 1982; Harries 1994; Millar 2006). Two of the foremost patrons were the *augustae* Pulcheria and Eudocia, who, as we shall see, concentrated much of their activities in the area between the Baths of Constantius and the Blachernae, straddling the Constantinian wall.

The old highway to Constantinople, the Via Egnatia, entered the city through a major gate in the Constantinian wall, probably the Melantias Gate, named after the settlement of Melantias and its associated imperial villa, about 25 km distant from the city. Also after the building of a new coastal highway in the 330s, the inland route was kept up, and worked as an important military road until at least the 7th century.²³ Unfortunately, we do not know anything about the possible decoration of the gate. But considering its importance, we can probably assume that it would have been similar to the Golden Gate in the Constantinian wall.

The location of the gate has been identified thanks to the sanctuary situated next to it. The shrine was dedicated to the Holy Notaries, Martyrius and Marcian, who were secretaries of Bishop Paul and is said to have been executed at the instigation of the Arian bishop Macedonius in 343. According to Sozomen (4.3), a church was built to commemorate their place of death, commenced by John Chrysostom

and completed by Bishop Sisinnius in 426/27. The *Synaxarium* tells us the exact location: at the Melantias Gate at the Deuteron.²⁴ The Deuteron was a suburb that had developed by 400 on a hill in the northern part of the area between the Constantinian and Theodosian walls, its name probably derived from the distance of two Roman miles from the Milion at the Augusteum.²⁵ The Melantias Gate is thus most probably the gate where the northern arm of the Mese passed through the Constantinian walls, with the course of the road following the crest of the ridge. The area outside the gate, which had been a place for decapitations in 343, was used as such again in 450 when Chrysaphius, the powerful chamberlain of Theodosius II, was executed there (*Chronicon Paschale* s.a. 450; see also Prosper Tiro s.a. 450; *Collectio Avellana* 99.11).

Constantine obviously considered the Melantias Gate and the northern arm of the Mese to be an important route, since he located his mausoleum, a palace, and baths close by the gate. He was buried here in 337 and his tomb surrounded by cenotaphs of the apostles. His son Constantius II founded the Church of the Holy Apostles, which adjoined the imperial mausoleum, and here he deposited the relics of Timothy, Luke, and Andrew in 356–357 (Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* 4.58–60; *Chronicon Paschale* s.a. 356, 357, 370; Mango 1990b; 2000, 175).²⁶ These were the first known translations of relics to Constantinople, and possibly also in the Roman world. They may give an idea of the lengths that Constantius was prepared to go to raise the status of Constantinople, who almost lacked indigenous saints (Ward-Perkins 2012, 61–2).

By the 420s, the *Notitia* shows a concentration of imperial *domus* in the western part of the city within the Constantinian walls, with the residences of the empresses Placidia, Eudocia, and Arcadia in the Tenth Region, and those of Pulcheria and Flacilla in the Eleventh. Magdalino has suggested that the *domus* were grouped close together, where the two regions adjoined, in the area between the Church of the Holy Apostles and the large Baths of Constantius, in what had become an aristocratic neighbourhood by the 5th century (Magdalino 2001, 57–58; the borders between urban regions were established by Berger 1997).

The Baths were among the oldest and grandest in Constantinople. They were founded by Constantius in 345, and situated close by the Church of the Holy Apostles. In 427 the baths were reinaugurated, probably following an extensive rebuilding, and renamed the Theodosian Baths in honour of the reigning emperor. The baths were also connected with John Chrysostom, who had celebrated the Easter of 404 there after being driven from the Great Church, and whose remains were deposited in the nearby Church of the Holy Apostles in

438 (*Chronicon Paschale* s.a. 345; Proclus, *Oratio* 20 (PG 65.827–34); Socrates 7.45; Marcellinus Comes s.a. 438).

One of the most important Christian foundations along the northern arm of the Mese was a large and remarkable church dedicated to St Laurence, founded by Pulcheria.²⁷ Laurence was a deacon of Rome who had according to legend been killed there during persecutions in 258. Constantine built a large basilica near the martyr's grave outside Rome and decorated his tomb (*LP* 34.24). Already during the 4th century, there developed a considerable empire-wide veneration for Laurence, and a sanctuary that contained his relics would substantially increase the status both of Constantinople and of the founder. The feast of St Laurence on August 10 drew large crowds to the church in Constantinople in the 470s, according to the *Vita S. Matronae* (*Vita prima S. Matronae* 38; *Vita altera S. Matronae* 32; the *Synaxarium Ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae* 882, 1.21–23 gives the date for the feast). According to Theodore Lector and the *Chronicon Bruxellense*, it seems that Pulcheria not only got hold of some of the remains of Laurence, but also of St Agnes, another of the main saints of the city of Rome (Theodore Lector 2.585 (PG 86.216A); *Chronicon Bruxellense*, Cumont 1894, 21).²⁸ Our sources do not record the date of Pulcheria's foundation, but it was used for the deposition of further relics in 439 and 442/43, and a monastery was probably attached to the church by 448, although the church was not fully completed until just before Pulcheria's death in 453 (Marcellinus Comes s.a. 439; s.a. 453; Cedrenus 1.600; *Patria* 71; *Typikon* 1.103; see also *Synaxarium Ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae* 882, 1.53, 55.9). Pulcheria might have obtained these prestigious relics in connection with the marriage between Valentinian III and Licinia Eudoxia at Constantinople in October 437. According to Theodore Lector the deposition of the relics occurred on September 21, so they might have taken place just before the imperial marriage (Marcellinus Comes s.a. 437, *Chronicon Paschale* s.a. 437; Socrates 7.44; Theodore Lector 2.585). About this time, Bishop Xystus had to obtain permission from Valentinian for the restoration of the Church of Laurence at Rome; to relinquish part of the saint's body for Valentinian to bring on his eastern journey might have been part of the bargain (*LP* 46.6).²⁹ The location of the church in Constantinople has been debated, but it seems clear that it was built not far from the Blachernae and was visible from the Golden Horn. This must not, however, imply that it was situated close to the shore, and in my opinion it was likely built on high ground in the vicinity of the northern branch of the Mese.³⁰

Magdalino has argued for the translation of a relic of Laurence from Rome only in 451, as a gift from Bishop Leo before the council in Chalcedon later that year. This is based solely on the testimony of an

English 11th-century pilgrim. However, as we have seen, Theodore Lector and the *Chronicon Bruxellense* both date the translation to the reign of Theodosius II. Magdalino admits this, but considers that it must in that case have happened close to 450 by the fact that Sozomen does not mention Laurence in connection with Pulcheria's piety and patronage. But in the passage from Theodore, the translation of Laurence is mentioned right after that of Chrysostom, which took place in 438. That Sozomen does not mention Laurence's translation would thus be inconclusive since his 9th book is preserved incomplete. Sozomen claims in his introduction to cover the period up to 439, but the extant text ends in 425. Since Theodore's narrative, which goes up to 439, is based partly on Sozomen, it is conceivable that he had access to the now lost part of Sozomen's 9th book (Magdalino 2001, 63 and n. 40; Ciggaar 1976, 259; see also Janin 1969, 312 who argues that the church was built by 450, but without any supporting arguments; Holum 1982, ch. 6 argues for a date in the early 440s).

When Emperor Basil I restored the Church of Laurence in the late 9th century, it is said to be located in a neighbourhood known as the Πουλχεριανᾶς. This toponym might indicate that this area also contained other works by Pulcheria (*Theophanes Continuatus* 339; Berger 1988, 530; Mango 1972, 51 on the property and buildings of Pulcheria at Constantinople; see also Dagron 1974, 97, 400–1). The *Chronicon Paschale* records that the cistern of Pulcheria Augusta was inaugurated in 421 in the presence of Emperor Theodosius II. For the same year, Marcellinus Comes records the building of the cistern of Aetius, which has been identified with the large open-air cistern along the northern branch of the Mese, between the Deuteron and the gate of Adrianople in the Theodosian wall (*Chronicon Paschale* s.a. 421; Marcellinus Comes s.a. 421). Since the *Chronicon Paschale* only seems to record large-scale cistern projects, such as the cistern of Aspar, we may tentatively identify Pulcheria's cistern with that of Aetius. For some reason the name of the urban prefect, rather than that of the empress, stuck to the building in later times. That the first of the large open-air cisterns were built in this part of Constantinople is no coincidence. This was one of the highest points in the city, where the main aqueduct line entered, and would make for a high-placed location for water storage. But, as we have seen, it was also an area with many imperial and aristocratic houses, which could tap into the desirable water. Moreover, the great baths of Constantius would need to be supplied. The construction of the cistern in 421 might indeed be linked to the restoration of these baths, completed in 427.

After the death of Theodosius II in 450, Pulcheria married Marcian, who became new emperor. Shortly thereafter they had the powerful

chamberlain Chrysaphius executed, outside the very gate that connected Pulcheria's palace and her suburban estates. The church next to the gate commemorated the execution of one Marcian – now his namesake ordered another. The new emperor seemed to entertain an attachment to the northwest part of the city as well, and it was on the northern branch of the Mese, between the Church of the Holy Apostles and the Church of Polyeuctus, that he founded his own forum, with its monumental column still standing. It might be that the *domus* of Pulcheria was in the immediate vicinity of this forum (Mango 1990a, 46; Bauer 1996, 213–15; Magdalino 2001, 67).

The *Parastaseis* relates a story that Emperor Leo I, moved by his admiration for Pulcheria, transferred a statue of her and Marcian to the otherwise unknown Theodosian Porticoes. It has been suggested by Janin, following a passage in Theophanes, that they were located at Hebdomon. But Theophanes writes about “the castle of the Theodosiani in the Hebdomon”, not a portico (*Parastaseis* 45; Theophanes AM 6101 (AD 608/9); Cameron and Herrin 1984, 122–23, 235; Janin 1964, 408–11; Mango and Scott 1997, 426 and commentary 427, n. 7). Since Pulcheria and Marcian both had a special attachment to the Deuteron area, the porticoes might have connected the Melantias Gate with the Church of Laurence, and then perhaps on to Blachernae and the Church of the Theotokos, another shrine founded by Pulcheria (Theophanes AM 5943 (AD 450/51), see also Janin 1969, 169; Shoemaker 2008, 60; Mango 1998 argues for a foundation by Empress Verina).

Leo was also associated with this church, and decorated its apse with images of himself, his wife Verina and their sons at the sides of the enthroned Virgin (Farioli Campanati 1992, 147; Mango 1998). Similar porticoes towards important churches are known to have existed at Rome, Milan, and Antioch, and would be a fitting framework for imperial and liturgical processions that connected the Forum of Marcian and the house of Pulcheria, via the Church of the Holy Apostles, to Pulcheria's main ecclesiastical foundations on the outskirts of Constantinople.

Already in the 5th century, Constantinopolitan liturgy was celebrated at different stations in the course of the year, with processions being an integral part between a set of nodal points. On Saturdays, Sundays and certain feast days the people followed the bishop to a designated church and received the eucharist. The Church of the Theotokos and the Church of the Holy Apostles have been identified as two of these liturgical nodes among the early sources gathered in the *Typikon* and the *Synaxarium* (Baldovin 1987, 167–226, summaries at 204, 225–26; Brubaker 1999, 38–42). We also have evidence for a direct liturgical connection: a procession on July 2

began at St Laurence and ended at the Theotokos. It was led by patriarch and emperor, and celebrated the deposition at the Church of the Theotokos of relics associated with the Virgin Mary, which had been transferred there by Pulcheria in 451. Interestingly, the accession of Pulcheria fell on July 4, so that the feast of the virgin's shawl, and the annual celebration of the Virgin Empress Pulcheria's elevation to *augusta* became associated. Furthermore, we might postulate another link between the two churches through the temporal and topographical proximity between the feast of St Stephen on December 27 and that of the Theotokos on December 28.³¹

The status of the Church of St Laurence was further augmented by the deposition there of part of the relics of St Stephen, whose bones had been discovered near Jerusalem in 415 (Marcellinus Comes s.a. 439).³² Empress Eudocia did a pilgrimage to Jerusalem in 438–439, and triumphantly returned to Constantinople with part of the protomartyr's bones. As her relations with Pulcheria were frosty by this time, it may seem strange that Eudocia chose to deposit the relics at the church founded by her sister-in-law. However, the year 439 marked the peak of Eudocia's influence, and it might be that she sought to appropriate Pulcheria's prestigious church for her own purposes, as she might have appropriated the relics of Stephen from Melania at Jerusalem (Clark 1982). It has been suggested that this might also be the time when Eudocia founded her own church dedicated to St Polyeuctos, situated close to her residence near the Baths of Constantius, and later to be magnificently rebuilt by her great-granddaughter Anicia Juliana (*Anthologia Graeca* 1.10; Magdalino 2001, 58–9; Bardill 2004, 125–26). But Eudocia's ascendancy was short-lived, and in 441 she had to go in lifelong exile to Jerusalem, where she was later buried in the church that she had founded, dedicated to St Stephen (Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita S. Euthymii* 35; Evagrius 1.22).³³ Soon after Eudocia left the capital for good, the relics of the prophet Isaiah, brought from Jerusalem, were deposited at the Church of St Laurence (Cedrenus 1.600, in the 35th year of Theodosius II, i.e. 442/43; *Patria* 71). Although the sources are silent on who were responsible for this translation, it would be reasonable to suspect Pulcheria, who through a translation from the Holy City symbolically re-appropriated the church after Eudocia's fall from power.

Thus Pulcheria emerged the victor, and it might be that this turn of events is at the root of a story transmitted by Theophanes and Cedrenus, in which Pulcheria is the one depositing the relics of St Stephen in a newly built church “at the palace” in 427/28, thus antedating Eudocia's translation (Theophanes AM 5920 (AD 427/28)).³⁴ The palace referred to might originally have been the

domus of Pulcheria, since, after c. 534 but before the early 10th century, the relics of Stephen in Constantinople had been moved from the Church of Laurence to a new Church of Stephen close to the former residence of the empress.³⁵ The event is in fact never linked with the oratory of St Stephen in Daphne at the Great Palace, as is often thought.³⁶ That Theophanes' story should be relegated to the world of legend has been convincingly shown by Wortley and Mango. Its fabrication might conceivably have been an attempt for Pulcheria to retrieve not only the Church of Laurence, but also appropriate the relics of Stephen from her sister-in-law competitor (Wortley 1980; Mango 2004).³⁷

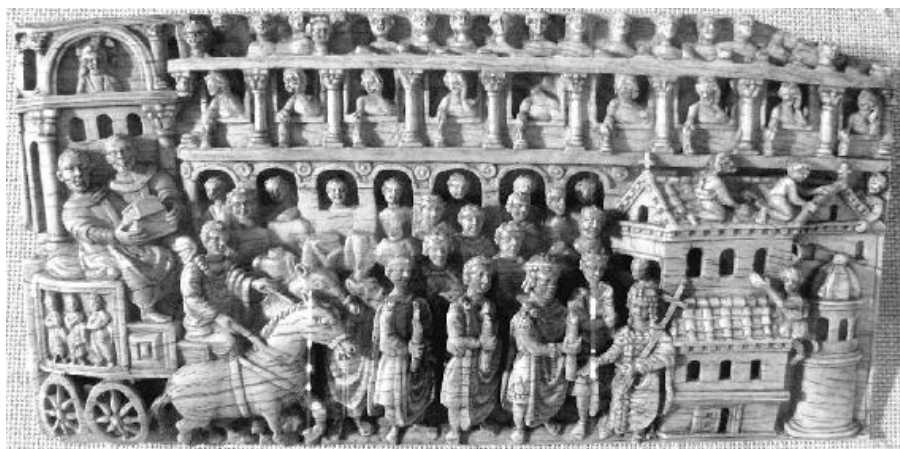


Fig. 9.3. Trier Ivory (Wikimedia Commons).

It could be fruitful to bring the so-called Trier Ivory into this context (Fig. 9.3). This ivory plaque shows to the left a carriage drawn by mules on which two clerics are seated, together holding a casket. In front of the carriage are people walking holding tapers. The procession is lead by an emperor. They are heading towards a basilica church, identified by crosses on its roof, where men are still working. At the entrance stands an empress, holding a large cross, to receive the procession. The event is placed in a specific physical context, with a two-storied building in the background, with an open arcade at ground level and a colonnaded upper story. To the far left is a colonnaded structure with a lunette showing an image of bearded and haloed man in half-figure. A throng of people are massed on all levels in the two-storied building, as well as in the street in front of it. The people in the colonnaded upper story are all swinging censers and seem to be singing.

The literature on the ivory is vast: it has been variously dated on stylistic grounds between the 5th and 10th century, and the scene

depicted has received many different interpretations.³⁸ It seems generally accepted that the plaque depicts a translation of relics; the scene with bishops in a carriage holding a casket with the martyr's remains is well known from descriptions by Theophanes and *Chronicon Paschale* among others (*Chronicon Paschale* s.a. 415; Theophanes AM 6044 (AD 551/52)). However, there is disagreement over which event is recorded. One suggestion by Holum and Vikan that has become widely accepted in later years is the possibility that the ivory records the translation of the relics of Stephen in 421 or 427/28 (Holum and Vikan 1979; Holum 1982, 103–9). As we have seen, this story should only be considered legendary, but this would of course not stop it from being depicted. However, the oratory of Stephen in Daphne was probably a centrally planned building with an octagonal narthex, not corresponding to the basilica church shown on the plaque (Mathews 1995, 3–8). If the building to the far left indeed is the Chalke (first suggested by Strzygowski 1901, 85–9), as Holum and Vikan suggest, this would date the ivory to the 9th century or later, since there probably was no icon above the gate before Irene, and indeed no Chalke at all before Anastasius. To be driving a carriage through the Chalke and Great Palace to the private apartments of Daphne does seem strange to anyone familiar with the layout and use of the imperial palace. Neither can we expect a relic to enter Constantinople through the land walls. Indeed, all translations in the 4th and 5th centuries that we have detailed information about seem to indicate that the relics entered the city from the sea, at the Chalcedonian jetty, located close to the Strategion.³⁹ It is indeed possible that the ivory incorporated all kinds of anachronisms and inconsistencies, but when these pile up we should probably start looking for alternative interpretations.

We might note a few peculiarities of the scene. The procession obviously has to involve an emperor and empress, with the empress being given the central role, standing at the entrance of the receiving church, almost as a hostess receiving her guests. The minute portrayal of the surroundings is also unusual, and this might give us a clue to the topographical context. The building to the far left, with its columns and lunette, could be identified with a gate building, and the Chalke gate of the imperial palace has been suggested, as we have seen. However, beneath the lunette we see three small arched windows which are very reminiscent of the room above a city gate from which the portcullis was operated, as can be clearly seen at for instance the Porta Tiburtina or Porta Labicana at Rome, built in 401–403. The image above the gate is almost certainly an image of Christ, since the halo has a cross incised. Thus, we are probably dealing with a gate in a city wall, albeit finely decorated, like the city gate depicted

on the Palatium Mosaic at Ravenna, or the Golden Gates at Constantinople. Along the side of the extramural road stretches an arcade in two stories, much like the extramural porticoes known from Rome, Milan, Antioch and several other cities. Adjoining this portico is a basilica church, still under construction, and clearly associated with an empress.

Although several different events would match this setting, one conceivable possibility would be the translation of the relics of Laurence, perhaps in 437/38, or those of Stephen in 439,⁴⁰ to the church dedicated to Laurence, work on which continued until 453, situated outside the Melantias Gate in the Constantinian wall, with the road possibly flanked by the Theodosian Porticoes. The emperor would then be Theodosius II and the receiving empress would either be Pulcheria or Eudocia. There are several similar translations from the city to extramural churches, like the translation of relics from Constantinople to the Church of St Thomas at Drypia in 398, that of Samuel from the Great Church to a newly built church at Hebdomon in 411, or those of the Forty Martyrs from the city to the extramural Church of St Thyrsus in 451 (John Chrysostom, *Homilia dicta postquam reliquiae martyrum* (PG 63.468–72); *Homilia dicta praesente imperatore* (PG 63.473–78); *Chronicon Paschale* s.a. 411, 451). This interpretation would turn the interpretation put forward by Holum and Vikan on its head: instead of depicting an *adventus* ceremony, the procession is going out from the city proper to a shrine outside the Constantinian walls.⁴¹

The area between the Baths of Constantius and the Blachernae thus became associated with the translation and deposition of some of the most prestigious relics of Christendom: Andrew, Timothy, Luke and John Chrysostom at the Church of the Holy Apostles, Laurence, Agnes, Stephen and Isaiah at the Church of Laurence, and relics of Virgin Mary at the Theotokos Church, not to mention the lesser foundations, such as the Church of Polyeuctus and that of the Notaries. As we have seen, the tradition of Christian piety attached to this area of Constantinople in the 5th century goes much further back, to Constantine and Constantius II, and provided an important link between the Constantinian and Theodosian families, also manifested in the two imperial mausolea attached to the Church of the Holy Apostles, the first constructed by Constantine, the second by Arcadius (Downey 1959; Grierson 1962; Johnson 2009, 119–28).

In the reign of Justinian, several important church restorations took place in the area, among them the reconstruction of the Church of the Holy Apostles, the Church of Laurence and the Church of the Theotokos, perhaps partly as counterweight to Anicia Juliana's magnificent rebuilding of the Church of Polyeuctus in the 520s. His

dynasty became further associated with the region through Justin II's erection of a sprawling palace at the Deuteron in the 560s. John of Ephesos, a contemporary, writes:

“For having formed the idea of erecting a palace upon the site of his former dwelling in the north-western suburb of the city, he razed a great number of houses there to the ground, and built a hippodrome, and laid out extensive gardens and pleasure-grounds, which he planted with trees of all kinds: and gave orders also for the erection of two magnificent statues of brass in honour of himself and Sophia” (John of Ephesos 3.24, trans. Payne Smith 1860).⁴²

The area had probably become so important that no imperial dynasty could afford to neglect it, and had to put their stamp there by new translations, church buildings and imperial residences, from Constantine, via Pulcheria, Eudocia, and Anicia Juliana, to Justinian, Justin II and Sophia. We might discern certain periods with an increased activity. The first is the construction of the imperial mausoleum, palace, baths and city wall by Constantine, followed by the building of the Baths of Constantius and the Church of the Holy Apostles, together with relic translations in the reign of Constantius II. The second period begins with the erection of a new dynastic mausoleum by Arcadius, in the 420s followed by the Baths of Theodosius, Cistern of Aetius/Pulcheria, Church of the Notaries, and palaces of Pulcheria and Eudocia, in the 430s by the Churches of Laurence and of Polyeuctus and several new relic depositions. This continues into the following two decades, with the foundation of the Theotokos Church in 451, the completion of St Laurence in 453, which is by then adjoined by a monastery, and the building of the Forum of Marcian, and probably the Theodosian Porticoes. Then the pace decreases, with the building of the Cistern of Aspar, and some dedications in the area by Emperor Leo. The third period is the reigns of Justinian and Justin II, which see the rebuilding of all major churches in the area, and the building of a new major palace complex.

Ravenna

The grouping of imperial palaces close to the city gate, coupled with extra-mural sanctuaries to Sts. Laurence and Stephen is a pattern which we will come across again as we move west, to Ravenna (Fig. 9.4). Here we will see a closer integration of palace gate, city gate, and martyr church, both geographically and artistically.

The extra-mural Church of St Laurence in Caesarea was one of the oldest in Ravenna, first mentioned in a sermon by Augustine in 425/26, and according to Agnellus built by a member of the court of Emperor Honorius (*Sermo* 322 (PL 38.1443–44)).⁴³ According to one inscription, copied in the 9th century but since lost, the complex was built by Valentinian III, probably in 425 or 426, if it should agree with the date of Augustine's sermon (*ICUR* 2.13). The church was built in an existing cemetery and was used for funerary purposes. It thus functioned in the same manner as S. Lorenzo fuori le mura at Rome, and perhaps also as the later inter-mural basilica to St Laurence at Constantinople. With the church was associated a combined oratory and mausoleum, also built by Lauricius, and dedicated to the Milanese saints Gervase and Protase, and to St Stephen, probably completed in 435 (Agnellus ch. 36; *CIL* 11.270).⁴⁴ Notice the pairing of Laurence and Stephen once again.

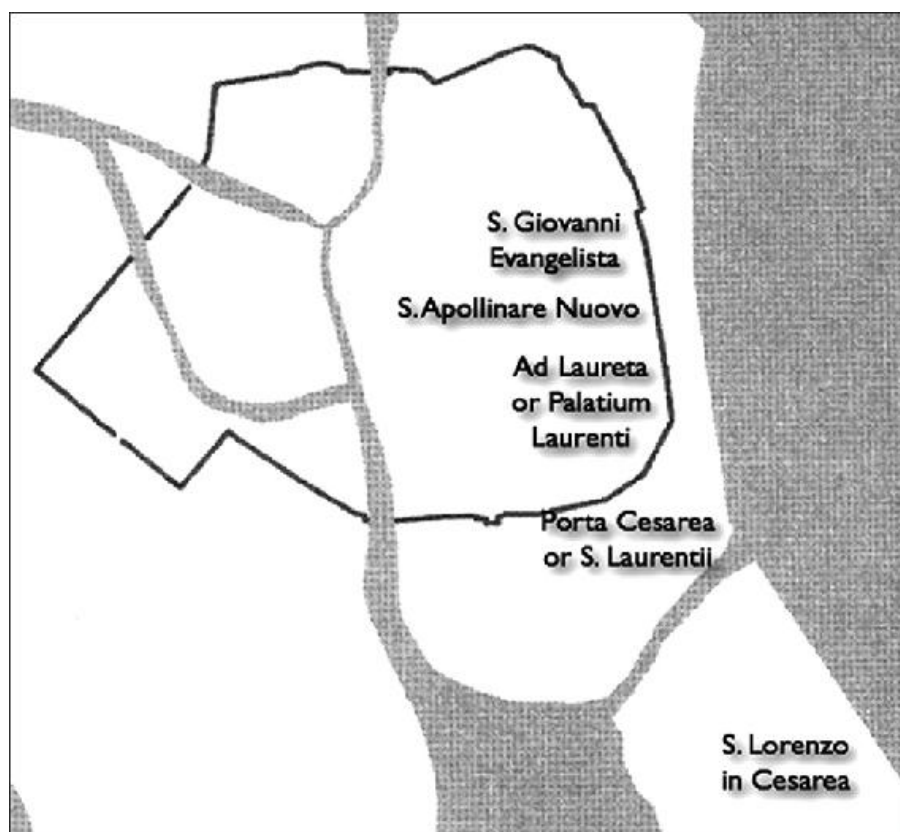


Fig. 9.4. Map of Ravenna (by the author).

From the church one reached the city through the Porta Cesarea, later known as the Porta Sancti Laurentii. This was one of the main

gates of the city, and led directly to the imperial palace. The first known palace was built during the reign of Emperor Valentinian III in the 420s, and was known as *Ad Laureta* or the *Palatium Laurenti*, which may be a name connected with the popular cult of Laurence (Agnellus ch. 40 and 132; see also Agnellus ch. 35 and 39; Deichmann 1989, 38, 50; Deliyannis 2010, 55–8). The first song by Merobaudes might throw some light on this otherwise shadowy palace, and it deserves quoting in full:

“Over the doors sits the Concord of a table portrayed and both the sacred pair of the imperial house, where festive tables bear eternal banquets and royal couches shine with purple cushions. The emperor himself, sparkling, occupies the middle of the ceiling with his wife, like the bright stars of the highest heavens, the salvation of the adoring world: before our protector a new exile bewails his suddenly lost riches. Victory has restored the world to him to whom nature gave it, and a famous court has offered a marriage from afar” (Merobaudes, *Carmina* 1.1–10, trans. Barnes 1974).⁴⁵

This poem probably describes the vestibule of the imperial palace. Note the use of the term *laris*, the guardian spirits, associated with entrances. A banquet scene is shown over the entrance. Then an image of the imperial couple Valentinian and Licinia Eudoxia is displayed in the centre of the ceiling. In front of them a so-called “new exile” is mentioned, which may refer to the Vandal treaty of 442, which restored part of Africa to the Romans, and made the Vandal prince Huneric a hostage in Ravenna.⁴⁶ The poem goes on:

“Here, where his sacred mother seeks kisses from her placid son, you would believe that it was a Castalian god with his mother. When his sister stands beside him, you would think the shining orb of the bright moon was flashing with her brother’s light. If his wife is there, you would say it was the joining in marriage of the Nereid Thetis to Macedonian Peleus. From this child too one may hope for a grandson, to whom Larissa alone might compare her hero. And look! a new-born child, who, scarcely yet sent into the world, already carries the mystic rites in her infant breast, confessing God by her crying; you would think she understands, so had she moved her soft mouth with trembling sound” (Merobaudes, *Carmina* 1.11–22).

The poem here describes a series of portraits that surround the central scene: mother Galla Placidia, sister Honoria, wife Licinia Eudoxia, older daughter Eudocia (betrothed to Huneric), and the baptism of the

infant daughter Placidia. These images may be compared with Procopius' description of the Chalke in Constantinople. The central images are similar: the imperial couple receive defeated barbarians. But in Ravenna there are no scenes of war, nor is Aetius portrayed like Belisarius, despite his strong position and the close ties between Aetius and Merobaudes. Nor are there any senators present. Instead there are a series of portraits of female members of the imperial family. Although the theme of victory is alluded to, here is a much stronger focus on peace and dynastic elements, through the use of depictions of family members, marriage, betrothal, and baptism.

Close to the palace, in the Church of S. Giovanni Evangelista, was another example of this dynastic theme. The church was commissioned by Galla Placidia soon after 425, and the apse was decorated with an imperial mosaic programme (Deichmann 1969, 121; 1974, 91–124; Piccinini 1992; Longhi 1995–1996; Orioli 1999; Amici 2000; Novara 2001, 265; Deliyannis 2010, 63–70). Although destroyed in 1568, it can be fairly accurately reconstructed through written descriptions from the 9th through 16th century.⁴⁷ In the apse Christ, surrounded by twelve books representing the apostles, was depicted enthroned and holding an open book.

Above the triumphal arch the text *Galla Placidia Augusta pro se et his omnibus hoc votum solvit* was displayed and flanked on either side by mosaics of a ship on stormy seas (CIL 11.276; ILS 818; RIS 1.2.568, 570; Rossi 1572).⁴⁸ Below the dome of the apse was the main dedicatory inscription:

“To the holy and most blessed apostle John the Evangelist the empress Galla Placidia with her son Emperor Placidus Valentinian and her daughter Empress Grata Honoria fulfil their vow for their deliverance from danger at sea” (CIL 11. 276; ILS 818, trans. amended from Deliyannis 2010, 68; see also Zangara 2000, 281–82).

The church was thus built as a thanksgiving to John the Evangelist for delivery from a storm, presumably during the journey from Constantinople to Ravenna in 425. The salvation of the imperial family can be interpreted as a sign of divine protection. The church could also conceivably be seen as a monument over the victorious campaign against Emperor John in that year.⁴⁹ In the lower part of the apse was another text, which said “Confirm, O God, that which you have wrought for us; from your temple (in) Jerusalem, kings shall offer you gifts.” This could be interpreted either as a reference to the city of Jerusalem, or to the church of that name in Rome. Below the inscription was displayed mosaics of the imperial couples Arcadius and Eudoxia on one side, and Theodosius II and Eudocia on the other,

offering gifts to Christ, or to Bishop Peter Chrysologus, who was depicted standing between the imperial couples accompanied by an angel. This might refer to gifts from the court at Constantinople, a symbol of their support for the building of the church, as well as for Galla Placidia's regime. The display of the imperial couples can be compared with, and may have inspired, the famous depictions of Justinian and Theodora in San Vitale.⁵⁰ The main points of interest to us are the imperial portrait medallions displayed inside the triumphal arch:⁵¹

Left half:

D VALENTINIANVS (Valentinian I)

D GRATIANOS (Gratian)

D CONSTANTINVS (Constantine III)

D HONORIUS (Honorius)

D THEODOSIUS (Theodosius I)

D GALLA PLACIDIA (Galla Placidia)

The layout may be compared to the medallions inside the arch at San Vitale in Ravenna, which, significantly, show the Apostles rather than members of the imperial house. In S. Giovanni only male members are portrayed, in contrast to the decoration of the palace vestibule, although Galla Placidia and Honoria are mentioned in the dedicatory inscription together with Valentinian III. We see here a strong dynastic theme, centred on Galla herself: the list of portraits contains her grandfather Valentinian I, uncle Gratian, father Theodosius, brothers Arcadius, Honorius, Gratian and John, husband Constantius, and son Theodosius. This dynastic display inside the triumphal arch and apse, erected only a few years after the overthrow of Emperor John in 425, can be read as part of a symbolic re-establishment of the Theodosian dynasty in the west, where the whole family back to Valentinian I is invoked. The dynastic link was also underlined through the choice of dedicating the church to John the Evangelist: a church with identical dedication was built by Theodosius I before 391 at the Hebdomon outside Constantinople, the site of the imperial accession of Arcadius, Honorius, and Theodosius II.

The eastern emperors are prominently displayed, which is fitting considering Theodosius' decisive intervention on the side of Galla Placidia and the young Valentinian III in the power struggle of 423–425. The decorative program of the church may thus be read as an equivalent to the “triumphal arches” raised in Constantinople to celebrate victory over tyrants in 324, 416, 498, and 540. Indeed, it is the first known instance of the display of imperial portraits in a church, and is an example of the gradual merging of imperial and Christian art (Deichmann 1974, 116–17; Mango 1998; Deliyannis 2010, 68–69).

This array of dynastic portraits may also be compared to the “historic imperial court” outside the Chalke Gate in Constantinople. The apse programme in S. Giovanni Evangelista shows a greater coherence and probably also symmetry, which is not surprising when compared with the miscellaneous collection of statues that accumulated outside the Chalke. The statues displayed on the Chalke itself, however, show the same strong dynastic theme, with family connections by blood or adoption from Justin I to Tiberius (and perhaps Maurice). Moreover, both programs probably centred on the odd man out. That man was Constantine, unrelated to both imperial houses, yet an indispensable part of the dynastic display (Farioli Campanati 1992, 137; Bassett 2004, 127; Deliyannis 2010, 68, n. 164).

One of the most famous images from Ravenna is the so-called Palatium Mosaic (Fig. 9.5), which is displayed in the Church of S. Apollinare Nuovo, built by the Gothic king Theoderic in the early 6th century. The mosaic shows the facade of Theoderic’s palace, which probably was simply an extension of the old imperial one. Originally, before they were removed by the Catholic bishop of Ravenna in the late 6th century, several male figures were depicted in the flanking colonnades, perhaps members of the court, or perhaps a collection of statues, reminiscent of the Chalke gate at Constantinople. The main entrance is articulated by large columns crowned by a pediment. At this point we should take Bishop Agnellus’ description of the palace facade into account:

“... above the gate and on the façade of the palace of this city, which is called Ad Chalci, where the main gate of the palace was, in the place which is called Sicrestum, where the church of the Saviour now is. In the pinnacle of this place was an image of Theodoric, beautifully made in mosaic, holding a lance in his right hand, a shield in his left, and wearing a breastplate. Facing the shield stood Rome, executed in mosaic, with spear and helmet; and on the lance-side was Ravenna, figured in mosaic, with right foot on the sea, left on land hastening towards the king” (Agnellus, ch. 94, trans. Deliyannis 2004; see also Deichmann 1989, 51–4).

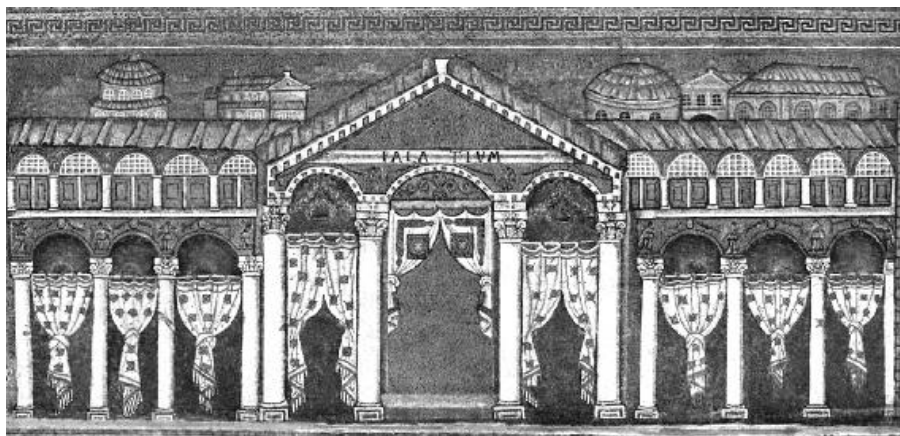


Fig. 9.5. Palatium Mosaic in S. Apollinare Nuovo in Ravenna (Wikimedia Commons).

Thus, above the gate was placed a highly symbolic image, but this is nowhere to be seen in the pediment of the mosaic. However, investigations of the mosaic have shown that the central part of the pediment has been replaced, and the scene described by Agnellus could fit into this space (investigated in 1951: Bovini 1952; 1966, 75–77).⁵² The image carries a clear political statement, with Theoderic as protector of his twin capitals, the Gothic centre of Ravenna, and the old capital of Rome with its Senate. Theoderic is the mediator between the two ruling groups of his kingdom, maintaining the fragile balance. This message is probably further underlined by the buildings shown in the background.

Two groups of buildings flank the palace gate, each consisting of one square and one round, domed structure. These could be interpreted as the two cathedrals of Ravenna, the Arian and the Catholic one, together with their famous baptisteries. In this way, the mosaic mediates a strong civic, political, and religious message of harmony, and a general consent to the rule of Theoderic. The grouping of ruler and city personifications may in some respects be compared to the statues of Theodosius and the Tyche of Constantinople displayed on the Golden Gate, but is here more forcefully expressed.

As for the term *Ad Chalci*, we do not know when this was first applied to the palace gate in Ravenna; it could have happened in the time of the exarchs. But it is equally possible that it was adopted already by Theoderic, in emulation of the Chalke Gate constructed at this very time in Constantinople by Anastasius. As Theoderic says himself in a letter to Anastasius: “Our royalty is an imitation of yours” (Cassiodorus, *Variae* 1.1.3).

As mentioned earlier, the so-called Palatium mosaic not only depicts

the royal palace, but encompasses the whole city of Ravenna, with its cathedrals, city wall, and city gate. On the right edge of the mosaic is one of the main gates of the city, flanked by towers, and crowned by the text *CivitasRavenn(as)* (Fig. 9.6). We also make out the faint lines of a figure that once stood in the centre of the gateway. The focus here will however be on the image shown above the gate, in the lunette. This shows three male figures, in wide white overgarments, which may be togas, *himatia* or *pallia*, together with red-striped tunics. The middle one is carrying a cross and tramples on a serpent. This reminds us of the painting put up by Constantine over the entrance to his palace in Constantinople, which showed a cross, and the emperor together with his sons trampling on a dragon. This is also a popular form of imperial iconography, with several gold emissions in Ravenna and Constantinople in the mid- and late 5th century, showing the emperor with cross and victory-crowned globe, trampling a serpent. This is an obvious reference to a passage by the prophet Isaiah, and is underscored by the legend *Victoria Auggg*.⁵³

It has been suggested that the lunette shows Christ flanked by two apostles, but Christ seem usually to be depicted wearing purple in Ravenna mosaics (Johnson 1988, 92; Deichmann 1989, 70–75). For this reason, a depiction of an imperial or royal figure also seems unlikely. However, a strong candidate would be St Laurence, towards whose church this gate led, and who eventually would give his name to the gate itself, the *Porta S. Laurentii*. Laurence could be flanked by Xystus and Hippolytus, the saints he is usually associated with. The depicted scene seems to have kept favour with the Catholic bishop, and could have its origins in the early 5th century, when the Church of St Laurence was founded, and the mosaic image of St Laurence dominating Galla Placidia's mausoleum was made.⁵⁴ Presumably, the image was meant to protect the city by displaying a powerful martyr, which also happened to have strong imperial associations.



Fig. 9.6. Detail of the city gate from the Palatium Mosaic (Deichmann 1958).

Rome

Finally, we will make a brief comparison with the situation in Rome (Fig. 9.7). Our focus will be on the eastern outskirts of the city. One of Rome's most important Christian shrines is the Church of S. Lorenzo fuori le mura. Built by Constantine next to the grave of the martyr, it was a huge building. Excavations in the 1950s uncovered the original church, measuring 99×35 m. It functioned as a covered cemetery, with burials beneath the floor as well as in separate mausolea, connected with the church along both aisles. The most prestigious burials were located in the crypt of the martyr, situated under the Verano Hill to the north of the basilica (LP 34.24; *CBCR* 2.94–114, 118–23; *LTURS* 1.203–11).

The pontificate of Xystus III in the 430s began a period of unprecedented popularity of the cult of Laurence. Xystus probably undertook a large restoration of the church, and provided it with a baptistery, before being interred next to Laurence after his death. The *Liber Pontificalis* concedes that Xystus had to ask imperial permission for his restoration project, and we may surmise that it could only have been undertaken with imperial financial backing, like the Church of S. Paolo fuori le mura a few decades earlier. The papal rhetoric aside, the restoration might have been part of Valentinian III's large

restoration programme in Rome (LP 46; Duchesne 1921; Krautheimer 1934; Geertman 1976; 1995; Humphries 2012). The building boom continued into the second part of the 5th century, when, in the 460s, Bishop Hilary built an episcopal residence, two baths, and two libraries near the church. Significantly, Hilary also built an oratory and a monastery dedicated to St Stephen next to the church. His attachment to the cult was shown by his burial in the crypt, next to Laurence and Xystus. Hilary's successor Simplicius either built a new basilica to St Stephen nearby, or he rebuilt Hilary's oratory into a proper basilica. Later in the 5th century, basilicas to Agapitus and Hippolytus, followers of Laurence, were built in the vicinity, together with a hostel for paupers and pilgrims (LP 48.12–13, 49.1, 50.1, 53.10; *LTURS* 1. 30; Colella 1997; Serra 2002). Taken together, the scope of these building projects in little more than half a century is quite astounding. They created a small city around the martyr's bones, and attest to the strong attachment between the cult, the city of Rome, its bishop, and the emperor.

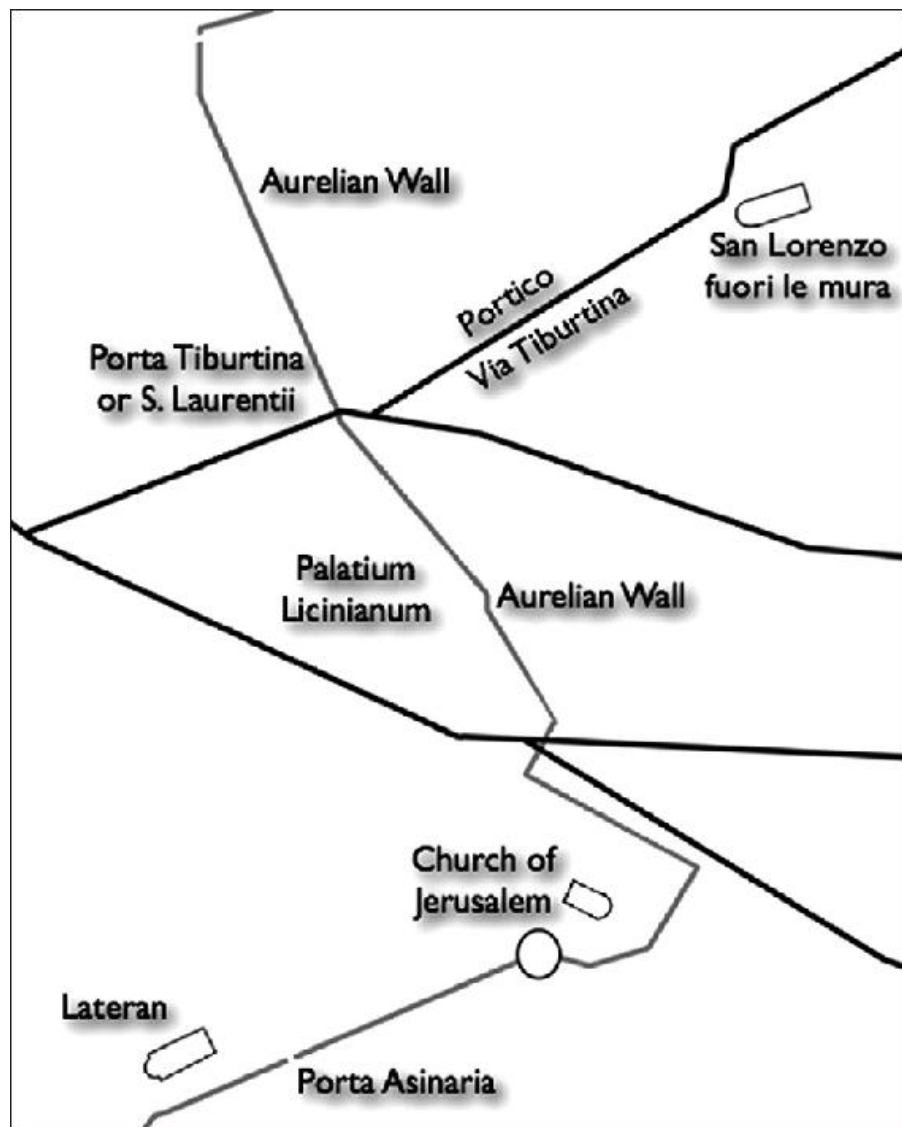


Fig. 9.7. Map of eastern Rome (by the author).

It may be in connection with Honorius' major rebuilding of the Porta Tiburtina (Fig. 9.8), or Valentinian's of the Church of St Laurence, that a portico between the gate and San Lorenzo was built, although this portico is not mentioned before the early 8th century (LP 91.2; Serra 1998; Brandt 2009; Spera 2011). The portico to the church provided a formalisation of the approaches to the Porta Tiburtina, and also shows the importance of the sanctuary of Lawrence and the magnetism it exerted. This is also shown by the changing names of the gate itself, which is attested as the Porta S. Laurentii from the early 7th century.⁵⁵ Originally, this was probably a

quite insignificant gate in the Aurelian Wall. However, when Honorius rebuilt the city walls in 401–403 he gave the Porta Tiburtina larger towers, an inner gate and a new decoration that comprised a travertine façade, statues of the emperors, and a monumental inscription that evoked the victorious and triumphant aspects of imperial rule (*LTUR* 3.290–99, 312–13, 4.124; Cozza 1997, 88–103; Malmberg and Bjur 2009; 2011).⁵⁶ In this way, the gate was in many respects similar, and a complement, to the new triumphal arch erected by Honorius in 406 at Ponte S. Angelo to celebrate victory over the Goths. In a way, the new triumphal arch was also a gate, giving access to the city through the river walls. It can be instructive to compare the inscriptions on the triumphal arch of 406 (*CIL* 6.1196) and the gate of 401 (*CIL* 6.1189), both speaking a common language of traditional imperial victory, at this time still without a hint of Christianity. However, the building of traditional triumphal arches was a dying tradition. Instead, the imperial message came to be mediated at city gates, palatial entrances and churches (Liverani 2004).



Fig. 9.8. Porta Tiburtina (by the author).

The 5th-century appearance of the Porta Tiburtina may perhaps be suggested by the Porta Appia, which still preserves much of its late antique guise intact. There are similarities between the main gates at Rome, with their square travertine towers, and the contemporary Theodosian Golden Gate in Constantinople, both in overall impact, and in details, such as the mouldings that crowns the stone work (Richmond 1930, 199–200, 257–62; Bardill 1999, 695). In its upgraded form the Porta Tiburtina counted among the most important

in the whole fortification, like the Porta Asinaria near the Lateran, which was also upgraded at this time. This signalled that the south-eastern part of the city had become much more important in the period between 270 and 400, probably due to the existence of the imperial and episcopal residences in this area.

Constantine extended an earlier palace complex on the Esquiline to use as his and his family's residence in Rome. Among other things he built a large rotunda that still stands, while baths and porticoed courtyards have also been unearthed in the vicinity. In the mid-5th century Valentinian III took up a more permanent residence in Rome, and his choice of location was probably the Constantinian palace on the Esquiline. It seems likely that it was by this point that the palace became known as the Palatium Licinianum, probably named after Valentinian's wife Licinia Eudoxia (*LTUR* 3.64–66, 4.45; *PLRE* 2.410–12; Cima 1995; Guidobaldi 1998). Located close to the palace, and also founded by Constantine, was the Church of Jerusalem, where the emperor deposited a fragment of the true cross. The church was restored by Valentinian III, his mother Galla Placidia and sister Honoria. Once more, here as in Ravenna, the family made a joint dedication (*ICUR* 2.1.107; *CBCR* 1.165–95, esp. 168; *LTUR* 3.27–28; Blaauw 1997).⁵⁷

The implied message of neighbouring churches to Stephen and Laurence outside Rome, and the combination of imperial palace, Jerusalem Church and true cross inside the city, was probably not lost to audiences. As in Constantinople and Ravenna, we see the pairing of the cults of Laurence and Stephen, and the obvious interest of emperors and empresses to put their stamp on the architectural setting, which involved churches, gates, porticoes, and even situating their own residences in close proximity to the hallowed places.

Concluding remarks

We began this investigation with five different gates at Constantinople with many common characteristics. All were associated with military triumphs over tyrants, and to display this message many traditional symbols of military victory were used. Military might was supplemented by a religious theme. Together, the gates displayed a powerful combination of military victory and divine protection, which made the imperial presence felt throughout the city. To the gates in Constantinople can then be added the two gates associated with St Laurence, at Ravenna and Rome respectively, and the entrances to the imperial and royal palace(s) at Ravenna. These also carried signs of victory, with proud inscriptions, snakes being trampled, enemies

humbled, and the ruler displayed as symbolic protector of the realm.

There seems to be a subtle, albeit important, difference between the images displayed at the palace gates compared to the city gates. At the palace, the focus was more on dynastic themes, whereas the city walls had stronger religious associations and a theme of imperial military might. This distribution may not be so surprising, the palace being, after all, the primary symbol of the dynasty, and the wall a military necessity. But a pure Christian symbolism at the palace entrance had possibly to wait until at least the time of Justinian, almost as if the emperors did not dare to have themselves overshadowed by Christ at their own house (The exception being the display of the “Saviour’s sign” at Constantine’s palace).

Gates often displayed apotropaic signs, such as the gorgon heads mounted at the Chalke. It was natural that Christian symbols came to be used in similar ways, the most obvious one being the sign of the cross, which was displayed at city gates at Constantinople, Ravenna and Rome, and later at the Chalke. Saints and martyrs could also be seen as more potent protection than walls, as expressed for instance in the sermons of John Chrysostom and Ambrose (e.g. John Chrysostom, *In martyres Aegyptios* (PG 50.693–698, at 694); *De sancto hieromartyre Phoca* (PG 50.699–706, at 699); see also Procopius, *De aedificiis* 1.3). To bring the relics and cult of Laurence and Stephen to Constantinople, Ravenna, and Rome, and locate it in extra-mural basilicas, was a further link in these saintly defences. At Ravenna, displaying the saints’ images above the main gate of the city further augmented this. This could be seen as an early example of a trend that would be established in the east by the mid-6th century, that not only relics, but also cult images could protect cities, thereby assuming the role of earlier palladia (Brubaker 1999, 265–66).

We have also seen how images displayed at the gates could have an, perhaps intentional, ambiguity. The first example was the gilded statue with a crown of rays at the Chalke, that the *Parastaseis* identified as Belisarius, thus transforming something originally associated with the sun cult, then with the imperial image, into a mythical war hero (Bassett 2004, 127). The second example is the figures depicted above the city gate at Ravenna. Was the central figure Christ, Laurence, the city’s patron saint Apollinaris, an apostle, an emperor or Theoderic himself? The ambiguity lets the image take on an inclusive and timeless quality, ready to be adapted to current circumstances. The third example is the ambiguous context of the word *Ierusalem* at S. Giovanni Evangelista at Ravenna. Does it refer to the city, to the church by that name in Rome (to which Galla Placidia added an oratory), or to the idea of a heavenly city, a New Jerusalem?

This brings us to a further problem of the relationship of

Constantinople and Ravenna to the two poles of religious and political legitimacy, Jerusalem and Rome. Both Constantinople and Ravenna struggled as new power centres without an established political tradition, compounded by a lack of religious status and an almost complete dearth of indigenous martyrs. That both cities tried to emulate Rome symbolically and politically is well known, but they also had to gain in religious stature to be proper seats of power. One way to do this was to import status, through the translation of relics. The ambitions of Constantius II, who transferred the remains of Timothy, Luke, and Andrew to Constantinople, are brought home by Paulinus of Nola: “And so Constantinople now stands with twin towers, vying with the eminence of great Rome, or rather resembling the defences of Rome in that God has counterbalanced Peter and Paul with a protection as great, since Constantinople has gained the disciples of Paul and the brother of Peter” (*Carmina* 19.317, trans. Mango 1990b, 53).

But this was not enough. The cults of Laurence and Stephen enjoyed widespread popularity, and their names must also have been attractive to the imperial family, the laurel and the crown being prominent imperial attributes (Proclus, *Oratio* 17.2 (PG 65.809–812), encomium of St Stephen, shows the wordplay the name of the saint encouraged). Probably the most important factor, however, in choosing to promote their cult in Constantinople and Ravenna was their strong association with the two pre-eminent holy places of the empire. By transferring the relics of Laurence and Stephen and depositing them in a common church, Constantinople joined two of the most prestigious saints from Rome and Jerusalem. Constantinople was not only a New Rome, but also a New Jerusalem, or in the words of the biographer of Daniel the Stylite, “go to Byzantium and you will see the Second Jerusalem, Constantinople” (*Vita S. Danielis Stylitae* 10). At Ravenna, a similar attempt was made through the building of the Church of Laurence, to which was added the oratory of Stephen in 435, almost the same year as Laurence’s Church was constructed and the translations performed in Constantinople. In Ravenna’s case, Gervase and Protase were added for good measure, thereby answering the challenge from Milan over primacy in North Italy (i.e. martyrs of nearby Bologna, whose cult had been promoted by Bishop Ambrose of Milan). The model of combining Laurence and Stephen was finally introduced in Rome three decades later, when an oratory and later a basilica of Stephen were added to the extramural Church of Laurence. To combine their cults was natural, since Laurence and Stephen were often thought of as a pair (Mango 2004, 33). They were both deacons, Stephen in Jerusalem under St Peter (who also was the legendary first bishop of Rome), and Laurence under Xystus II, the most venerated of the early martyred

popes after Peter. Both were put in charge of charitable activities, both were eloquent preachers and both suffered terrible martyrdoms. They were also associated by a two-week long cycle of feasts (i.e. the finding of Saint Stephen's Body on August 3, the Feast of Xystus on August 6, of Laurence on August 10 and of Hippolytus on August 139).

At Constantinople, Ravenna, and Rome one can trace similar groupings of imperial palaces, city gates, and extra-mural martyr basilicas, together forming a system of movement which bound together the city and its immediate hinterland: "the city colonized the countryside through the medium of the sacred way" (Brubaker 2001, 38). This contribution hopes to have brought further understanding of this phenomenon by studying these elements together, and by comparing the configurations at Constantinople, Ravenna, and Rome.

Abbreviations

~~CBC~~ *Corpus Basilicarum Christianarum Romae*
~~CIL~~ *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*
~~ICUR~~ *Inscriptiones Christianae Urbis Romae*
~~ILS~~ *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*
~~LP~~ *Liber Pontificalis*
~~LTUR~~ *Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Romae*
~~LTUR~~ *Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Romae Suburbium*
~~MGH~~ *Au* *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Auctores Antiquissimi*
~~PG~~ *Patrologiae cursus completus, series Graeca*
~~PL~~ *Patrologiae cursus completus, series Latina*
~~PLRE~~ *Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire*
~~RIS~~ *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*

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1 The date of this event is uncertain, with 726 (e.g. Theophanes) or 729/730 (e.g. *Vita S. Stephani Iunioris*) suggested by different sources.

2 As noted by Mango 1959, 24, the last phrase, 'thrust down in the depths of the sea', does not come from Isaiah 27.1, but Ezekiel 32.2 and refer to the Pharaoh. This addition may have been inserted here to refer specifically to the naval victory over Licinius (who is also compared to a serpent in *Vita Constantini* 2.1). The image of a *labarum* with the imperial portraits piercing a serpent or dragon is shown on copper *nummi* minted in Constantinople between 326 and 330, and also recalls the depiction above the gate in the Palatium mosaic in Ravenna, more on which below. See also Bardill 2012, 143–44.

3 The *Notitia Urbis Constantinopolitanae*, probably written in the 420s, does not mention the Chalke in Region II, where it should have been located, but lists the

Senate House, the Tribunal and the Baths of Zeuxippus. The Great Palace is mentioned in Region I, which did not adjoin the Augusteum. The Great Palace probably did not extend as far as the Augusteum until the expansion of the imperial guard and its additional barracks by Emperor Leo in 466–471, as shown in Malmberg 2003, 48–52. The first source to mention the Chalke is the text dated c. 498, which is inscribed on the building itself and preserved in the *Anthologia Graeca*. Theoderic's palace at Ravenna is said to have had an entrance *ad Chalci*, but this information comes from Agnellus, writing in the 9th century (c. 94, concerning events in 570–578). The Anastasian Chalke is then mentioned again during the reign of Justin I (Leo Grammaticus 123), and in connection with its destruction during the Nika Revolt in 532 (*Chronicon Paschale* s.a. 532; Theophanes AM 6024; Malalas 474).

4 The victory over the Isaurians in 498 gives us a *terminus post quem* for the inscription, and probably also for the erection of the gate.

5 See also Evagrius 3.35; Marcellinus Comes s.a. 498; McCormick 1986, 61–2. This can be compared with Claudian, *De IV consulatu Honorii* 81–6, where the usurpers Maximus and Eugenius is described as prostrating themselves before Theodosius and Honorius in 388 and 394.

6 *Parastaseis* 81 also mentions statues of Justinian and Theodora, or maybe Justin and Sophia, in front of the Zeuxippus, Cameron and Herrin 1984, 158–59. Although the *Parastaseis* sometimes offer fanciful identifications, it seems to describe with veracity what was still in existence in Constantinople at this time, Cameron and Herrin 1984, 45–7.

7 Berger 1988, 247–48, followed by Bauer 1996, 165, places the statues in *Parastaseis* 5b and 44a not on the Chalke itself, but on the Gate of Meletius, which probably gave access from the Regia street to the Augusteum after the rebuilding of 459. However, Mango 1959, 103–4 and Bassett 2004, 126 with n. 20, agrees with the *Parastaseis* in locating these statues on the Chalke itself.

8 Compare this statue with the famous statue of Constantine with a crown of rays, placed on a column at the Forum of Constantine.

9 Finds and photographs from the Great Palace excavation were exhibited, together with reconstructions of the palace's buildings, at the Archaeological Museum of Istanbul at two exhibitions: *In the Daylight: 8000 Years of Istanbul* (June 25, 2007–June 30, 2010) and *Byzantine Palaces in Istanbul* (June 21–October 2, 2011).

10 The *Patria* is, of course, a notoriously unreliable document, but as Mango (1997, 41) has stated, it “may be trusted when it says that a given building or monument was there and had certain visible features, but all the historical information it offers is extremely dubious and should not be accepted without corroborations from more reliable sources.” The passage cited above can only be found in the *Patria*, not the *Parastaseis*: Mango 1959: 98–103; Cameron and Herrin 1984: 62–3, 174–75. Mango does not think it likely for the statues of Maurice and his family to have survived in such a prominent position into the reign of Phocas. Furthermore, tradition associated Maurice with the Chalke and its icon: Mango 1959: 103, 110–11; Theophanes AM 6094 (601/2); John of Antioch 148. The passage from the *Patria* goes on to say: *The two statues whose hands are outstretched towards each other came from the land of the Athenians; they say they are of philosophers, as Ligurius the pagan says*. Trans. Cameron and Herrin 1984. This is reminiscent of a passage from Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* 4.15: *His full-length portrait also was also placed over the entrance gates of the palaces in some cities, the eyes upraised to heaven, and the hands outspread as if in prayer*. Maybe these ‘philosophers’ with outstretched hands were reused from the older Constantinian gate of the palace?

11 Note that in Theophanes AM 6094, it is the icon of Christ that speaks to Maurice, not a vision.

12 A convenient name, although work on the older land wall was completed under Constantius II, or maybe in the reign of Julian: Julian, *Oratio* 1.33; Mango 1990a, 24; Mango 2000, 176.

13 Manuel Chrysoloras, *Letter comparing old and new Rome* (PG 156.45D). The gate might be depicted on the early 15th-century map by Boundelmonti under the name *Antiquissima Pulchra Porta*. The column is the so-called Exakionion (literally 'the exterior column'), probably in existence by 379 (*Chronicon Paschale* s.a. 379), and said to carry a statue of Constantine the Great (*Patria* 54); Berger 1988, 352–56; Mango 1990a, 24–5, 47; Mango 2000, 175. See also Matthews 2012, 84–5.

14 Theophanes AM6232; *Great Chronographer* 15.6–7; *Theophanes Continuatus* 197; *Patria* 1.66, 73, 2.58a; Kedrenos 1.567; Zonaras 15.4; Hārūn ibn-Yahya 2.383; Robert de Clari; Mango 1990a; Bardill 1999, 687–88; Mango 2000; Bassett 2004, 212. For a comparison with other contemporary preserved gates, see Jacobs 2009 and Niewöhner 2011. See Martial 8.65 for elephant chariots on Domitian's triumphal arch in Rome.

15 *Haec loca Theodosius decorat post fata tyranni. Aurea saecula gerit qui portam construit auro.* CIL 3.735; Sirmond 1696, 1178; Strzygowski 1893; Meyer-Plath and Schneider 1943, 125, no. 8; Bardill 1999, 683–85; Asutay-Effenberger 2007, 54–61. Note that the spelling of Theodosius was altered to accommodate the metre of the inscription.

16 *Anthologia Graeca* 16.65: *On a statue of the emperor Theodosius. You did spring from the east to mid heaven, gentle-hearted Theodosius, a second sun, giver of light to mortals... Chronicon Paschale* s.a. 394; Mango 1990a, 43–4 and n. 40; Bardill 1999, 694–95. See also Hellemo 1989, 32–4. For a similar effect, see Marlowe 2006.

17 For a detailed account of the debate, see Bardill 1999 and Asutay-Effenberger 2007, 54–61. It has been suggested that the use of the word *porta* in the inscription would mean that the Porta Aurea was a gate in the city wall by the time of the inscription. However, the term *porta* was also used in Rome for customs stations outside the city, unrelated to any wall: Palmer 1980, 222–23.

18 Moreover, as first observed by Schweinfurth (1952, 270), the obelisk raised by Theodosius to commemorate his victory alludes to two tyrants (*extinctis... tyrannis*, probably referring to Maximus and his son Victor), while the inscription on the Golden Gate only mentions one tyrant (*post fata tyranni*).

19 That Theodosius spent September 416 in Heraclea is confirmed by *Codex Theodosianus* 11.28.11, dated at Heraclea, September 9, 416. Ursus is confirmed as urban prefect in Constantinople as the addressee of *Codex Theodosianus* 14.16.2, dated at Constantinople, July 23, 416, a law concerning the provisioning of the city. It is thus possible that Theodosius himself presided over the chariot races in July.

20 Incidentally, 416 was also the year that Theodosius formally took over the reins of government.

21 Prosper Tiro s.a. 416: *Honorius triumphans Romam ingreditur, praeunte currum eius Attalo, quem Lipara vivere exsulem iussit.* McCormick 1986, 56–60, 111–19; Matthews 1975, 354; Lejdegård 2002, 137–58.

22 The fourth Forum of Theodosius, located between the two Golden Gates and probably also known as the Sigma, was built in 435: Marcellinus Comes s.a. 435.

23 Ammianus 31.11.1 mentions the imperial villa as a concentration point of the army before the battle of Adrianople in 378. The route from Melantias was also used by the forces of Theoderic in 487 (Marcellinus Comes s.a. 487) and the Avars in 626 (Theodore Syncellus 304.32–35; *Chronicon Paschale* s.a. 626) when advancing towards the city. The distance is given by Agathias 5.14D as 140 stadia. The old Via Egnatia passed through Melantias, as documented by the *Itinerarium Antonini* (Cuntz

1929, 20, 33, 50), but this had changed by 333, as shown in the *Itinerarium Burdigalense* (Cuntz 1929, 90–1).

24 *Synaxarium Ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae* 162, 1.19–21.: ἐ τάφησαν ἐν τῇ Μελαυδησίᾳ πόρτῃ ἐν αὐτῇ τῇ Κωυσταυτινουττόλει ἐν τῷ Δευτέρῳ. Deuteron is outside the Constantinian wall (πρὸ τοῦ τείχους, Nicephorus Callistus, PG 147.125D), on a hill (ἐν ἐπιοσίμῳ λόφῳ, Simeon Metaphrastes, PG 115.1293C), at the Melandesia Gate, probably identical with the Melantias Gate. For the debate on the identification, see Janin 1936; 1938; 1969, 391; Schneider 1939; Franchi de' Cavalieri 1946; Mango 1990a, 32, n. 57.

25 Like the Hebdomon, located seven Roman miles from the centre of Constantinople. Habitation at Deuteron around 400: Mango 1990a, 49. Berger 1988, 521, locates the area between the Church of the Holy Apostles and the Cistern of Aetius. See also Procopius, *De aedificiis* 1.3.11–13.

26 For the debate about the course of the Constantinian wall, see most recently Asutay-Effenberger and Effenberger 2008.

27 Marcellinus Comes s.a. 453; Theodore Lector 2.585 (PG 86.216A); Theophanes AM 5945. It is described as very large by *Theophanes Continuatus* 339, and although this is written after rebuilding by Justinian I and Basil I, it might reflect the original size. See also Papadopoulos 1927; Janin 1969, 312–15.

28 The passage from Theodore comes from a contaminated manuscript of the *Epitome*, and its veracity has been questioned by Maraval 1985, 95 and Klein 2006, 86, but is corroborated by the *Chronicon Bruxellense*, and is accepted by Janin 1969, 312–15 and Mango 2004, 31. The second part of the *Chronicon*, containing an annotated list of emperors from Constantine I to Michael III, can be tentatively dated to the late 9th century, although the single existing manuscript was written c. 1300: Külzer 1991; Mango 2004, 31.

29 Another possibility is that Melania acquired some of Laurence's remains during her visit to Rome, and later gave them to Pulcheria when she visited Constantinople in 436/37. The struggle between Melania and Eudocia over the relics of Stephen shows that they were not on cordial terms, and might have pushed Melania into Pulcheria's camp, at least temporarily. *Vita St Melaniae* 5, 57; Gorce 1962, 44, 224, n. 1; Clark 1982. According to Holum 1982, ch. 5, n. 39, Melania did not arrive back in Jerusalem until Easter 438.

30 Procopius, *De aedificiis* 1.6. According to Janin 1969, 311, the use of ἐπίπροσθεν implies a certain distance between the church and the Blachernae. The *Synaxarium Ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae* 667, 1.19–23 also mentions a church dedicated to St Laurence near Blachernae (ἐν τῷ ὑαῶ τοῦ ἀγίου Λαυρεντίου πλησίον τῶν Βλαχερνῶν). Janin thinks that, since Marcellinus Comes s.a. 453 calls the church *inimitabili opere*, this could not be the dark church mentioned by Procopius, and suggests that there were two different churches. But could not Procopius chose to emphasize Justinian's restoration work to the detriment of the earlier church? Janin's other argument, that since the church had priests attached in the 530s it did not need a rebuilding, is irrelevant. Berger 1988, 530 argues for the existence of only one church, located between Petron and Blachernae.

31 The procession: *Typikon* 1.328.13–330.9; *Synaxarium Ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae* 793.6–794.9. Translation of the winding-sheet and coffin of the Virgin to the Church of the Theotokos in 451: John of Damascus, *Homilia II in dormitionem B. V. Mariae* (PG 96.758–53), relating a fragment of the *Euthymiac History*. See also Theophylact Simocatta 8.5 for the earliest allusion to relics of the Virgin at this church. Elevation of Pulcheria in 414: Marcellinus Comes s.a. 414; *Chronicon Paschale* s.a. 414. See also Wortley 2005.

32 Mango 2004, 28 thinks that Eudocia must have given Pulcheria the relic, but this is not stated in any source. We are fortunate to possess an eyewitness account of

the discovery of the relics in 415: Lucian, *Epistola ad omnem ecclesiam de revelatione corporis Stephani martyris* (PL 41.807–18, trans. Avitus; Vanderlinden 1946). This discovery might be one important factor in the renewed interest in both Stephen and Laurence in the 5th century.

33 The probable ruins of the church were discovered and excavated in the late 19th century: Vincent and Abel 1926, 766–67.

34 Repeated by Cedrenus 1.592. Theophanes is our earliest, and only, source. No 5th- or 6th-century chronicler record this important translation, not even Sozomen, a staunch promoter of Pulcheria. Theophanes' story is accepted by Janin 1969, 473–74, 489–90; Holum and Vikan 1979; Holum 1982, 103–9; Maraval 1985, 94; Kalavrezou 1997, 57–61; Constans 2003, 9; Klein 2006, 80–5. Holum 1977 argues for a date in 421. The story has been refuted by Wortley 1980; Clark 1982, 143; Magdalino 2001, 64; Mango 2004.

35 Marcellinus Comes s.a. 439 speaks of the relics of Stephen at the Church of Laurence as being venerated there still at the time of writing, c. 534. The *Typikon* 1.162, 358, and the *Synaxarium Ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae* 349–50, 861–64, records celebrations of Stephen's martyrdom on December 27, and the deposition of his relics on August 2, at the new church in the Konstantinianai. However, the *Typikon* 1.139 also records a commemoration of Stephen at the Church of Laurence on Wednesday of Easter week, which might be a memory of the relics of Stephen once being deposited there. See also Magdalino 2001, 61; Mango 2004, 33–4. That the Church of Laurence was probably built on Pulcheria's own estates might explain a vague passage in a sermon by Proclus, *In S. Stephanum* (PG 69.933–34), that Ἐν βασιλείῳ στέφανος· ἐθαλάμεισε γὰρ αὐτὸν ἡ βασιλίς καὶ παρθένος: *Stephen is in the palace, for the Empress, who is a virgin, has stored him in her chamber*. Trans. Mango 2004, 32. This might either be interpreted literally or figuratively (substituting *chamber* for *heart*): Mango 2004, 32–3. Proclus was bishop of Cyzicus, resident in Constantinople 426–434, and then Patriarch of Constantinople 434–446. The sermon is traditionally attributed to John Chrysostom, but Leroy 1967, 158 and Aubineau 1989 have shown Proclus to be the author.

36 This oratory does not play any significant role in ceremonies in the Great Palace until the early 7th century, such as the coronation of Heraclius and Eudocia in 610 (Theophanes AM 6102), Epiphania in 612 (*Chronicon Paschale* s.a. 612; Theophanes AM 6104), and that of Heraclonas in 638 (*De Cerimoniis* 2.27). It might first have been mentioned in connection with the deposition of a gospel by Barnabas 'in the palace', dated to 488, but the location is not explicitly identified with Daphne and the great palace until Cedrenus, writing in the 11th century: Victor Tunnunensis (MGH AA 11.191); Theodore Lector (PG 86.184C); George Monachus 2.619; Cedrenus 1.619. The famous arm or hand of Stephen does not play any part in imperial ceremonial until the 12th century, when it appears not in the oratory of St Stephen, but in St Mary of the Pharos: Mango 2004, 29–30.

37 That Sozomen, as a staunch supporter of Pulcheria, does not mention the translation seems strange. However, as we have seen, Sozomen's preserved narrative only covers the years up to 425. On the other hand, such a prominent translation should have been mentioned by other church historians and chroniclers.

38 Summaries of earlier views are presented by Mango 1959, Spain 1977; Holum and Vikan 1979; Brubaker 1999. The dating is made difficult by the lack of stylistic and technical parallels for the carving: Spain 1977, 286.

39 Such as the translation of Samuel to the Great Church in 406, Joseph and Zacharias to the Great Church in 415, and probably the translation of John the Baptist in 391: *Chronicon Paschale* s.a. 391, 406, 415; Sozomen 7.21.4–9.

40 The people censuring in the ivory might indicate a connection with Stephen, who, as a deacon, is almost always depicted censuring: Kalavrezou 1997, 58. The stance of

the empress, carrying the processional cross, can be compared with the depiction of St Laurence in the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia in Ravenna, and in other depictions of the saint: Deliyannis 2010, 78–9.

41 That the area between the Constantinian and Theodosian walls was not considered part of the city may be inferred from e.g. the *Notitia*: Mango 1986, 118; Matthews 2012, 84.

42 This information is partly corroborated by Theophanes *AM* 6062 (568/69), who locates the palace at Deuteron. The *Vita St Ignatii* (*PG* 105.529D) mentions a column at Deuteron with a statue of Justin II, which was destroyed by an earthquake in 866. *Patria* 142 mentions a column at the Deuteron with the statue of Justinian II, probably a mistaken identification for the statue of Justin II.

43 This letter to Augustine relates a story of a group of siblings who were cured through incubation at the Church of St Laurence at Ravenna, St Stephen at Ancona, and other shrines. Compare with Melania's wish to spend the night at the grave of Laurence at S. Lorenzo fuori le mura at Rome: *Vita S. Melaniae* 5. Note the pairing of Laurence and Stephen in Augustine's sermon. See also Deichmann 1974, 75–7; Deichmann 1976, 336–40; Deliyannis 2010, 61–2. On Lauricius, see *PLRE* 2.659–60. Agnellus ch. 34. The church was torn down in 1553; Deichmann 1976, 340; Novara and Ciognani 1993, 225–28; Novara 2001, 265.

44 See also Deliyannis 2004, 136–38. Excavations in 1983–1984 exposed a cemetery probably associated with the church, with several sarcophagi dated to the 5th and 6th centuries: Maioli 1987, 552–53, 558; Manzelli 2000, 187.

45 There is general agreement in interpreting the poem as a description of a work of art rather than real life. For a discussion of the poem and its political context, see Clover 1971, 16–27; Barnes 1974, 316.

46 Procopius, *De bello Vandalico* 1.4.12–13; also implied in Merobaudes, *Panegyrici* 2.24–30; Clover 1971, 21, 52–3. Barnes 1974 argues instead for a victory over the rebel Tibatto in Gaul in 437, followed by Mazza 1984.

47 The sources are: Agnellus ch. 42; two anonymous 13th-century sermons called *In dedicatione ecclesiae Sancti Iohannis Evangelistae* (*RIS* 1.2.567–72); the 14th-century *Tractatus* by Ronaldo da Concorreggio (*RIS* 1.2.573–74); Rossi 1572, 85–6; and Alberti 1550, carta 303 *recto*.

48 Amici 2000, 32, compared the text to similar inscriptions from St Peter's and S. Paolo fuori le mura at Rome: *ICUR* 2.1; 2.28, 68, 81, 98.

49 During the campaign against John in 425, the eastern fleet departed from Salona, but was wrecked by a storm: John of Antioch fr. 195; Philostorgius 12.13–15; Socrates 7.23. See further Deichmann 1969, 153; 1974, 94. The family's journey from Ravenna to Constantinople in 423 has also been suggested, most recently by Amici 2000, 15–6.

50 Agnellus ch. 42: *Confirma hoc, Deus, quod operatus es in nobis, a templo tuo Ierusalem tibi offerent reges munera*. Trans. Deliyannis 2010, 68 (my addition of parenthesis to in). Repeated by *RIS* 1.2.570 and Rossi 1572. See Longhi 1995–1996, 54–5, for interpreting *Ierusalem* as a church in Rome. See also Deichmann 1974, 122–23; Farioli Campanati 1992, 139.

51 *CIL* 11.276; *ILS* 818; Deichmann 1969, 155; Longhi 1995–1996, 39; Amici 2000, 17, n.14, 29–33. D stands for *divus*, NP for *nobilissimus puer*, used for princes that died before reaching adulthood. The following imperial members were excluded: Julian (not Christian), Valens and Constantius II (Arians), Valentinian II (suicide).

52 Locating the image described by Agnellus in the tympanum of the mosaic was first suggested by Ricci 1923, 45 and has become generally accepted. For a reconstruction of the motif, see Longhi 2001, pls. I, 1 and 2.

53 Emissions by Valentinian III, Petronius Maximus, Majorian, and Severus at

Ravenna, in 425–465. At Constantinople, the motif is depicted on coinage by Marcian and Leo in 450–474. It also became popular in Visigothic and Vandalic coinage during the mid-5th century. Courcelle 1966; Panvini Rosati 1978, 293–94; Farioli Campanati 1992, 141; Arslan 2005.

54 The figure depicted in the mausoleum is dressed as a deacon (Mackie 1990, 55; Deliyannis 2010, 78), is carrying objects borne by deacons, and heads towards a gridiron over a fire. Laurence is sometime depicted carrying a processional cross. Most scholars agree that this image shows St Laurence, summarised by Deliyannis 2010, 78–9, although Mackie 1990 has argued for St Vincent of Saragossa.

55 The first gate at Rome named after a saint was the Porta S. Petri, first attested in the 5th century, followed by Porta S. Pauli and Porta S. Pancratii, mentioned by Procopius. Porta S. Laurentii is first attested (as S. Lorentii) by the *Itinerarium Malmesburiense*. Dey 2011, 225.

56 See also Coates-Stephens 2004, 89–110. This was part of a general rebuilding of the gates. It is however clear that the relative status of the Porta Tiburtina was heightened at this time. The two other gates we know had similar inscriptions, the Portae Portuensis and Labicana, were among the most important ones. The inscriptions mention statues of the emperors, probably prominently displayed above the gate: *LTUR* 3.313.

57 Though now lost, the inscription was transcribed in 1494. The absence of Licinia Eudoxia from the text would suggest a date prior to her marriage in 437.

URBAN ARMATURES, URBAN VIGNETTES: THE INTERPERMEATION OF THE REALITY AND THE IDEAL OF THE LATE ANTIQUE METROPOLIS

Hendrik Dey

The staggering assemblage of late antique mosaics from the Byzantine provinces of Palestine, Syria and Arabia has become a scholarly growth industry in recent decades. Art historians, archaeologists and, increasingly, historians have come to recognize these works not only as artistic *tours de force*, but also as historical documents of signal importance, capable of furnishing an original and often unparalleled perspective on the socio-cultural *Gestalt* – and the administrative, economic, linguistic and demographic trajectories – of the thriving and diverse communities that produced them, in vast numbers, from the 5th century through the 8th (Balty 1995; Dunbabin 1999, 160–208; Piccirillo and Alliata 1999; Bowersock 2006 are a few recent highlights). Redoubled archaeological efforts, spurred on by the pioneering impetus of Father Michele Piccirillo in the 1980s and 1990s, have vastly expanded the corpus of documented works, and new finds continue to appear with startling frequency (for example, Piccirillo 1993; Piccirillo and Alliata 1994).

One strikingly common feature of mosaic pavements executed between the 6th century and the 8th, particularly in churches, are compact vignettes of urban centres. While the earliest-discovered and most spectacular example is the famous “Madaba Map Mosaic” from the church of St George in Madaba, Jordan, datable to shortly after 543, other examples abound. At Gerasa/Jerash, images of Alexandria and Memphis feature in the nave mosaics of the church of St John the Baptist, built ca. 531, as well as at the nearby church of Sts Peter and Paul, datable to ca. 535–40 (Biebel 1938; Piccirillo 1993, 288–92).

The same cities appear in the floor-mosaics of the church of St John at Khirbat al-Samra, dated by an accompanying inscription to 639 (Piccirillo 1993, 304–05; Michel 2001, 197–99). The church on the acropolis at Ma'in, near Madaba, features an extensive, though fragmentary cycle of urban vignettes that may date as late as 719–20 (Piccirillo 1993, 200–1; Michel 2001, 370–71). Excavations during the 1980s at Umm al-Rasas (ancient *Kastron Mefa'a*) uncovered a detailed and topographically faithful depiction of the site itself in front of the apse at the “Church of the Lions,” executed in either 574 or 589 (Piccirillo 1993, 236; Duval 1994, 169–71). More remarkably still, the mosaic pavement of the nearby church of St Stephen, of 8th-century date (not earlier than 718, and thus, like the acropolis church at Ma'in, nearly a century after the Muslim conquest of the region), is constellated with nearly 30 urban vignettes: in addition to ten cities of the Nile Delta arranged around the rectangular border of the central carpet of the nave, the intercolumniations of the nave colonnades contain representations of 17 Levantine cities, while two local villages home to prominent donors appear at the east end of the two side aisles (Piccirillo 1993, 238–39; Duval 1994; Bowersock 2006, 65–81).¹

As Bowersock has said in his excursus on this remarkable corpus:

“perhaps the most impressive result of the mosaic evidence, in aggregate, is the proof of an urban self-consciousness that was combined with Greek culture, whatever the ethnicity or religion of the people ... This self-consciousness, which clearly lasted into the 8th century, is reflected in the numerous representations of cities all across the region” (Bowersock 2006, 117).

Indeed: the urban culture that did so much to define the political, economic and cultural networks of the Mediterranean world in antiquity manifestly continued to flourish in the 6th, 7th and 8th centuries in the vibrantly eclectic, Greco-Roman/Semitic/Arabic cultural matrix of the Levant (see generally Foss 1997; Walmsley 2007), where town-dwellers were more eager than ever to proclaim their place in a trans-regional *oikoumene* whose crowning jewels remained its urban centers. The same is true for other regions of the Roman world, in the west as well as the east, as we shall see. A closer look at a few of these striking images may help to shed some light on what it was about their cities that late antique urbanites so prized, on how they perceived and imagined the contemporary cityscape, and in the final instance, on why cities – and images of cities – continued to loom so large on the conceptual horizons of so many people, across so much of the former Roman empire.

Urban images in the 6th century

We will begin by taking a closer look at two 6th-century urban images, starting with the relatively understudied depiction of Alexandria at the church of St John in Gerasa, and moving on to the most intensely-scrutinized of them all, Jerusalem on the Madaba Map Mosaic. These vignettes are unusually prominent and detailed, fittingly given that they depict two of the five leading patriarchal sees of the Christian world. The constraints of the medium required the mosaicists to focus their attention on a few, salient details, whence a comparison between the topographical features singled out for inclusion and the physical topography of both cities, insofar as this is recoverable, may help to elucidate the relationship between iconography and reality, and to explain why colonnaded streets in particular featured so prominently in both the image and the reality of each place. We will ask how and why the mosaicists made the artistic choices they did; what their choices suggest about Alexandria and Jerusalem *imaginaire* (cf. G. Dagron's *Constantinople imaginaire*, 1984); why remarkably similar images of cities, especially capital cities, continued to proliferate in the same period as far away as Rome; and finally, why, and to what purpose, such imagery was overwhelmingly confined to churches, to an extent which biases and lacunae in the archaeological record seem insufficient to explain.

Alexandria

The church of St John the Baptist at Gerasa, built in 531, comprises an inner circle with four semicircular *exedrae*, situated within a square exterior wall (Michel 2001, 244–51). The mosaic floor of the central space, much of which is now lost, featured Nilotic scenes set amongst watery landscapes, with groups of rural dwellers who appear to process toward cities. Alexandria appears in front of the north-eastern exedra, where it is paired with Memphis; inscriptions in Greek identify both cities (Plate 22) (Biebel 1938; Piccirillo 1993, 288–89; McKenzie 2007, 251–53). Alexandria is shown from an oblique bird's-eye perspective; its roughly circular, or better ovoid perimeter is defined by a high wall studded with towers. The Pharos appears to the viewer's right of the city, near one of the wall's two gates, an arched aperture which opens onto the prospect of a street-colonnade, with white columns and a trabeated entablature, which recedes into an otherwise featureless space rendered in black tesserae.² The urban interior which appears over the parapets of the encircling wall is dominated by four structures, some if not all of which must be

churches; two are of basilical plan with pitched roofs, both dwarfed by the profile of two domed edifices. The more central of the latter two, shown rising from an arcaded drum, is the loftiest building in the city; the second dome, farther to the viewer's left, caps the clerestory of a *tholos*-like structure, which seems to consist of a trabeated colonnade surmounted by a stouter colonnade at second-story level. The section of the mosaic at far left is (very unfortunately) missing, but enough survives to provide one, crucial detail: diametrically opposite the rightmost gate in the wall lies a second gateway, the existence of which is proven by the green "foliage" of the tree shown behind and just to the left the surviving gate-tower, which continues all the way to ground-level to indicate what can only be an aperture in the mural circuit. This gate-tower is abutted by the trabeated columns of what is clearly another street-colonnade, which connects the gate with the monumental trio of structures shown in the city-centre, comprising the loftier of the two domes, flanked by the two basilicas. The axis of this colonnade aligns quite precisely with the remaining gateway of the circuit at the viewer's lower right. The central "urban armature" (in MacDonald's felicitous phrase, 1986, 5–31 and *passim*) of Alexandria, as depicted in the church of St John, thus consists of an ovoid circuit-wall bisected by two diametrically-opposed gates, each connected to the monumental heart of the city via converging tracts of the same colonnaded street.

It remains to determine to what extent this configuration corresponds with what is known of Alexandrian topography. Among the other leading cities of the late antique Mediterranean (by universal consent of both ancient and modern observers Rome, Constantinople, Antioch, Carthage and, in a spiritual sense, Jerusalem),³ Alexandria is and will almost certainly remain by far the most poorly-documented, as the vast majority of its most monumental remains have been swallowed up by the sprawling medieval and modern incarnations of the metropolis (the most complete and up-to-date topographical overview of the city is McKenzie 2007; see also Haas 1997, esp. 19–32). Some general observations and informed conjectures are feasible nonetheless.

The walled perimeter, constrained since Alexander's founding of the city by the contours of the elongated spit of land on which it sits, between Lake Mareotis and the sea, seems to have described an irregular rectangle with rounded corners, especially pronounced on its eastern flank (Fig. 10.1) (McKenzie 2007, 25–28). The urban core gravitated around the axis of the Canopic Way, the gargantuan thoroughfare that bisected the city along its long, east-west axis. Five kilometres in length and fully 30.5 meters in width, flanked on both sides by continuous colonnades, and bracketed by the Gate of the

Moon in the west and the Gate of the Sun in the east, the street and the monumental edifices that clustered along its course, including the Ptolemaic palatial quarter and the principal agora, formed the undisputed architectural centerpiece of the city as a whole (Haas 1997, 29–31; McKenzie 2007, 20–24, 190). For Achilles Tatius, writing in the 2nd century AD, the street was the essence of Alexandria’s urban grandeur (Achilles Tatius, *Leukippe and Kleitophon*, 5.1).

In Late Antiquity, the leading congregational churches of the city, notably its successive cathedrals, arose along the colonnades of this grand avenue. The first cathedral, dedicated to the sainted Alexandrian Patriarch Theonas, was originally erected at the beginning of the 4th century, and subsequently reconstructed on more than one occasion; it was perhaps situated near the western extremity of the Canopic Way (McKenzie 2007, 231). In any case, it faced directly onto the street, as several textual sources indicate, notable among them Sophronius’ early-7th-century image of the spectacle that awaited those leaving the church after the Christmas service:

*“Upon exiting the sanctuary (temenos), wait in the dromos, that which is the outstanding place in the city of the Alexandrians, laid out in the scheme of a grand avenue in the midst of two porticoes, adorned with columns and marbles, packed with a great crowd of people and freighted with all manner of commercial goods.”*⁴

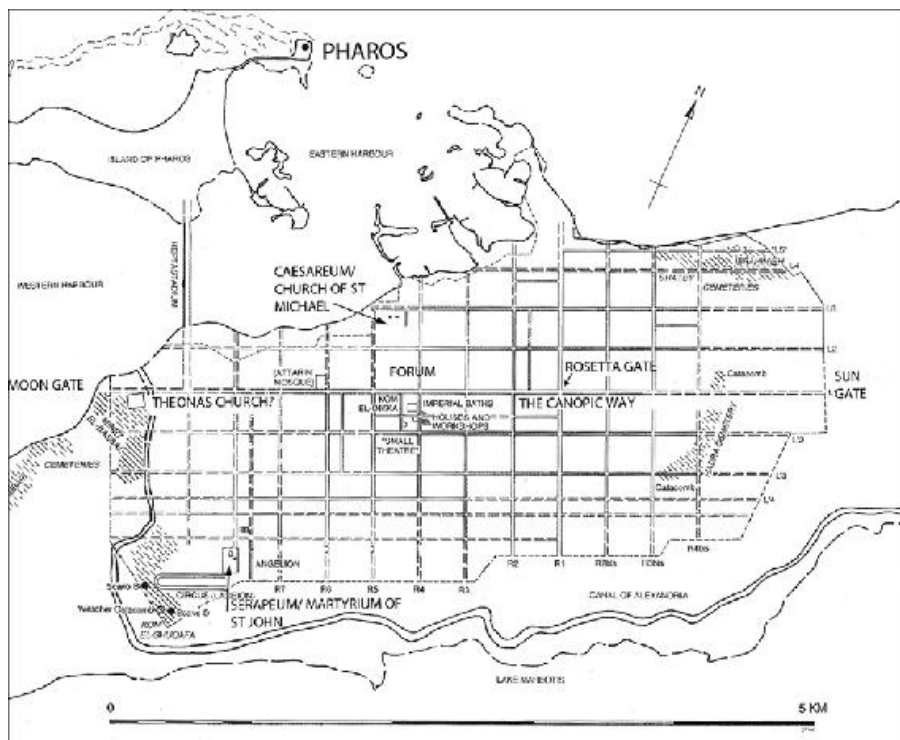


Fig. 10.1. Plan of Alexandria in late antiquity (adapted from McKenzie 2007, 236).

In addition to illustrating the immediate topographical connection between the site of Alexandria's first cathedral and the Canopic Way, Sophronius' words graphically capture the visual and cognitive impact of this central avenue, and its continued centrality in the "mental geography" of contemporary observers in the early 7th century. Under Constantius II in the 350s, the cathedral was relocated to the new church of St Michael, built in the city-centre in the precinct of the old Caesareum, which faced the Canopic way across the open square where irate pagans burned the furnishings of the new church in 356 (see Athanasius, *Historia Arianorum*, 56, with McKenzie 2007, 242).

There is no archaeological or architectural evidence sufficient to reconstruct the appearance of either of these buildings, or any of Alexandria's principal late antique churches, in any detail; and the dozens of literary sources which mention Alexandrian churches are extremely vague with regard to architectural particulars, and rarely offer anything beyond the most cursory indicators of their positioning in the city (cf. McKenzie 2007, 231). Other possible candidates for identification with the two domed structures visible in the mosaic at Gerasa include the martyrium of St John, built at the beginning of the 5th century atop a hill in the southwest quarter of the city on the site of the destroyed Serapeum, which was octagonal in plan (McKenzie

2007, 246). The Hellenistic Tychaeum, located near the centre of the city, was a round structure surmounted by a dome, still described among the city's most venerable monuments in the early 7th century.⁵ A fragmentary *ampulla* of 5th- or 6th-century date depicts St Athenog[enes] next to the profile of a round, domed church or martyrial shrine, about which nothing else is known (McKenzie 2007, 247).

In light of these scattered tidbits of topographical information, what sense might we make of the Alexandria mosaic at Gerasa? We might begin with the Pharos, a quadrangular tower surmounted by an octagonal upper story which is clearly represented as such in the mosaic (for a convenient overview of the iconographic and literary evidence for the configuration of the Pharos, see Clayton 1988). The position of the Pharos just to the right of the walls roughly corresponds with the panorama that would have presented itself to those arriving from the Nile in the southwest, via Lake Mareotis, or indeed by sea into Alexandria's principal, eastern harbor (undoubtedly the favoured approach for ships arriving from the Levantine coast). If we then imagine, as this visual perspective implies, that the gate shown at the viewer's right is the eastern entry into Alexandria, the Gate of the Sun, the domed structure at the far left would stand in the south-western quadrant of the city, south of the final stretch of the Canopic Way where it approached the Gate of the Moon in the western flank of the circuit wall, and thus in a position that corresponds quite closely to the actual location of the octagonal martyrion of St John. Without minimally claiming to individuate convincingly the remaining three monumental edifices in center of the cityscape, we would likely not go far wrong to imagine that one or both of the cathedral churches of Theonas and George are evoked, alongside, just possibly, the Tychaeum.

What does seem quite clear is that the mosaicist(s) made a concerted effort to include the most conspicuous components of Alexandria's urban infrastructure, beginning with the basic configuration of the city as a vaguely oblong walled circuit, bisected by a principal colonnaded avenue which extended between two main gates on opposite sides of the perimeter, and led directly past the majority of the most prominent buildings (75% of them, in the mosaic's schematic rendering) in the monumental urban center. In my view, in other words, there is an element of basic verisimilitude in this rendering of the cityscape, which would have been immediately recognizable to anyone with firsthand experience of Alexandria's urban layout, or reasonably accurate knowledge thereof.⁶ The impression of verisimilitude is heightened by the suggestion, schematic to be sure, of a tetrapylon in the very centre of the city,

summarily indicated by the intersection of two colonnades at diverging angles, separated by a square roof supported on higher columns, situated just to the lower left of the central dome. In the middle of its course, the intersection of the Canopic Way with the (much shorter) main *cardo* was indeed dramatically punctuated by an imposing *tetrapylon*.⁷ The mosaic's quotient of verisimilitude thus seems to be particularly high in regard to the main thoroughfare of the city, the avenue most frequented – and seen – by residents and foreigners alike, the stage in front of which the most ostentatious public spectacles and processions unfolded.

We might say that the Alexandria mosaic evinces a kind of internal coherence, a visual and spatial logic that mirrors the topographical sequencing of the real city: if a central, colonnaded axis and the monumental edifices annexed to it – a circuit-wall pierced by two main gates, several especially prominent churches, the *tetrapylon* – predominate, it is on some level because this interconnected ensemble of distinctive features epitomized and indeed dominated the perceptual experience of late antique Alexandria. And while the question whether, and to what extent, the creators and/or patrons of the mosaic at St John had firsthand knowledge of Alexandrian topography can never definitively be answered, there is no need to invoke blind reliance on pattern-books or illustrated maps to explain their iconographical choices. This observation holds *a fortiori* for the depiction of Jerusalem in the Madaba Map Mosaic, to which we now turn.

The Madaba map and Jerusalem

The vast scholarly tradition on the mosaic floor of the church of St George at Madaba continues to raise as many questions and disputes about the sources, inspiration and purpose of the “map” as it has managed to answer, the majority of which will be left aside here (for the *status quaestionis* on all aspects of the map, the definitive overview at present is Piccirillo and Alliata 1999). Uncovered and partially destroyed during the reconstruction of the church at the end of the 19th century, the surviving portions of the map-mosaic cover the region from the Nile Delta in the south to northern Israel and the Transjordan in the north and east, though the area originally covered may well have reached as far north as Asia Minor.⁸ The *terminus post quem* for its execution comes in the depiction of Justinian's church of Mary at Jerusalem, the *nea ecclesia*, dedicated in 543; and there is broad consensus for a date in the decades immediately following, very possibly before the end of Justinian's reign in 565 and almost

certainly little after the end of the 6th century (see, e.g., Piccirillo 1999a, who propends for a date between the 560s and the first decade of the 7th century, and Donner 1992, 13–15, who favours a date before the death of Justinian in 565).

The vignette of Jerusalem, circumscribed by an oblong, walled perimeter and labeled “the holy city Jerusalem” (H ΑΓΙΑ ΠΟΛΙΣ ΙΕΡΟΥΣΑ[ΛΗΜ]), likely appeared in the exact center of the composition, in keeping with the conception of the city as the navel (*omphalos*) of the Christian universe (Plate 23) (cf. Sivan 2008, 188; for the (probable) centrality of Jerusalem, see Donner 1992, 16; Shahid 1999, 147–48). The interior of the walled perimeter is dominated by the profile of two colonnaded streets, which diverge at an acute angle from a semicircular plaza, located adjacent to the northern gate of the city (the current Damascus Gate), and adorned with a single, freestanding column. Three clearly-identifiable Christian shrines rise dramatically above their surroundings: in the north, the Holy Sepulchre complex with the Anastasis Rotunda and its adjoining basilica, shown opening directly onto the western colonnade of the main *cardo* via a stairway and narthex with three entrances; Justinian’s Nea Church at the southern extremity of the same street, at the termination of its eastern colonnade; and beyond, the late-4th century Church of Holy Zion on its hill in the southwest quadrant of the city, located within the southern extension of the walled circuit added in the mid-5th century.⁹

As Yoram Tsafrir has effectively indicated by juxtaposing an archaeological plan of Jerusalem with the mosaic vignette, the configuration of the two colonnaded streets depicted on the latter corresponds remarkably closely with the topographical reality of the 6th-century city (Fig. 10.2) (Tsafrir 1999, esp. 159). Indeed, the geometry of these two streets is the only feature of the image which approaches a cartographical standard of accuracy. The irregular, angular perimeter of Jerusalem’s walls was anything but the regular oval shown on the map; the Temple Mount is pointedly omitted; and the relative positioning of the three principal churches, while recognizably rooted in reality, has been significantly distorted to allow for the placement of the Holy Sepulchre at the very center of the city, as the *omphalos* of the city that is itself the *omphalos* of the Christian world. Yet such distortions, so obvious on a modern plan, would have been far less apparent from the street-level perspective from which Jerusalem was inevitably experienced by late antique observers. From the plaza in front of the Damascus Gate, 6th-century eyes would have beheld only the receding forest of columns along the main *cardo*, surmounted by the silhouette of the Holy Sepulchre on the right and, perhaps, vague in the distance on the left, the Justinianic Nea Church;

and the archway just to the left of the street, through which the colonnade of the initial tract of the adjacent *cardo* appeared, where it angled off to the south-east before bending to run parallel to the *cardo maximus*, exactly as it does in the Madaba Map. At the bend in the street, a final colonnaded segment departs eastward for the Lions' Gate, the principal entry into the city from the east.

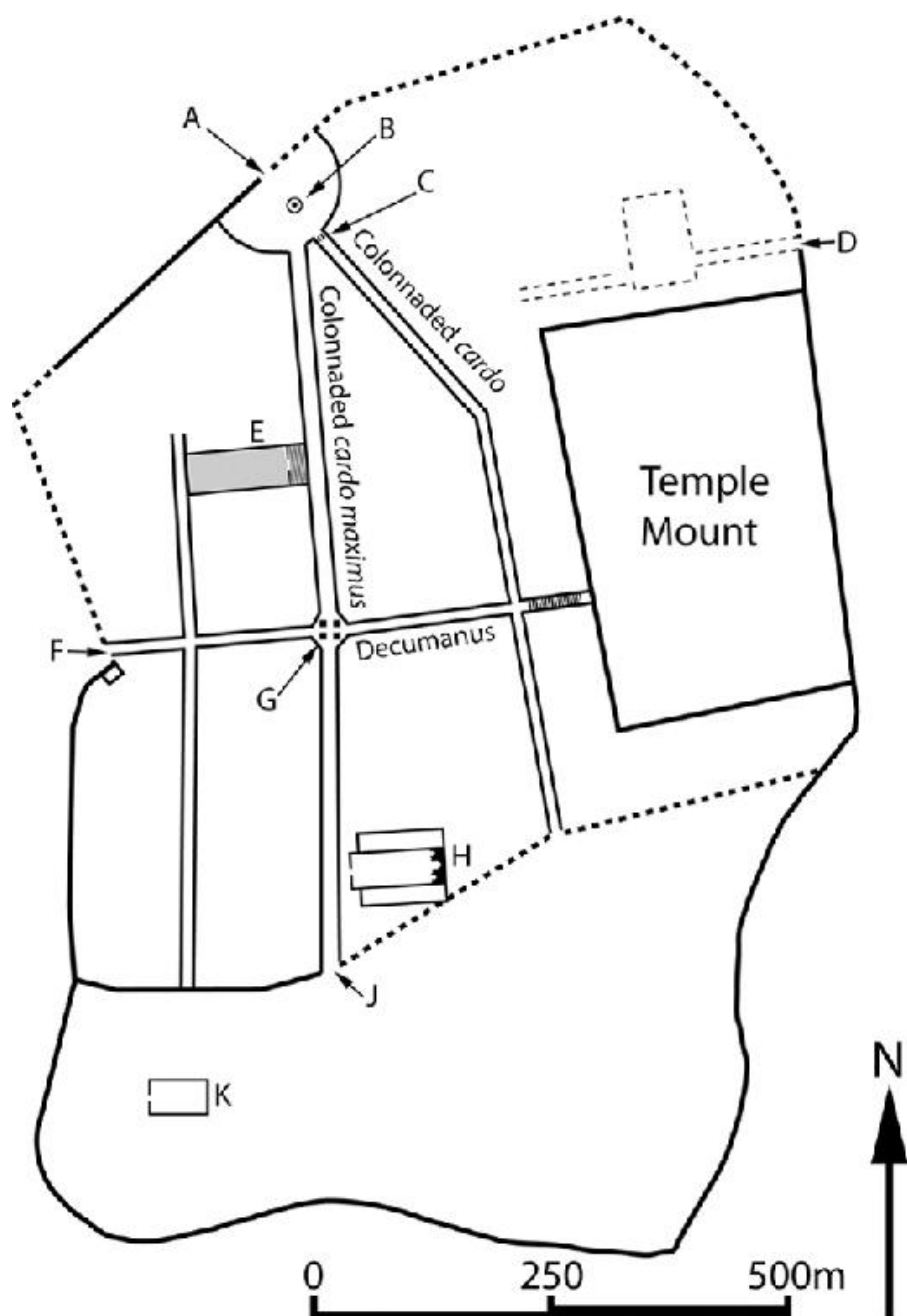


Fig. 10.2. Schematic plan of Jerusalem in the sixth century. A: Neapolis Gate (just inside modern Damascus Gate); B: open plaza and columnn; C: arch; D: Eastern Gate/Lion Gate; E: Holy Sepulcher Complex; F: Western Gate; G: Tetrapylon; H: Nea Church; J: Nea Gate; K: Church of Holy Zion.

The image of Jerusalem, it seems to me, is a bird's-eye view of the city inspired primarily by a human's-eye view from ground-level, and more specifically from the most frequented and architecturally-distinguished streets, the grand, colonnaded avenues designed to channel the flow of traffic through the city and frame the religious processions that linked the Holy Sepulchre with the two great churches to the south (cf. Pullan 1999, 166–68).

For a sense of how large this central “urban armature” loomed in the minds of the leading architects of its 6th-century configuration, we need look no further than the archaeological record, which indicates that the southern half of the main *cardo* was monumentally re-edified with new pavers and continuous colonnades on both flanks in the mid-6th century, almost certainly in connection with the construction of the Nea Church in 543 (Avigad 1993; Tsafirir 1999, 160–62). The architectural centrepiece of Justianian's reign in Jerusalem, that is, would have remained incomplete without the extension of the grand avenue that proclaimed it the physical as well as spiritual pendant to the complex of the Holy Sepulchre. Thus, in the case of the colonnaded *cardo* and the two great churches it linked together into a cohesive architectonic framework, the correspondence between the mosaic image and the urban reality seems more conceptual than topographic or cartographic. More than simply appearing in the Madaba Map's rendition of Jerusalem, and bearing a plausible resemblance to the situation on the ground, these features are given a degree of visual prominence – the two colonnaded streets and the plaza alone account for something like a quarter of the intramural area as shown – that vastly exceeds their actual scale. They are made to predominate to such an extent that they become the main iconographical embodiment of the city as a whole, providing clear visual cues designed less to indicate where particular sites were located than to proclaim which parts of the urban fabric were truly important; to capture the essence of “the holy city Jerusalem.”

Further, on the likely assumption that the mosaic dates to the second half of the 6th century, the presence of the southern extension of the *cardo* and the Nea Church indicates that the artists and/or patrons at Madaba sought to present the most up-to-date vision of the city they possibly could. To my mind, the inclusion of these very recent additions to the cityscape suggests that the mosaicists were not relying primarily on pattern-books of the type often proposed to have informed the style and iconography of popular motifs, unless we

imagine that an updated “pattern” incorporating the latest construction-projects at Jerusalem had been produced and transmitted to Madaba within a short span of years (for the suggestion that pattern-books might underlie the urban vignettes in Jordan, see, e.g., Biebel 1938, 350; Hachlili 2009, 104). Even if such were the case, the template might then be better envisioned as a kind of preparatory sketch, based on current – firsthand? – experience and closely reflecting the topographical *realia* and the iconographical priorities of the moment, than as a kind of ossified ideogram blindly followed by uninformed and uncomprehending craftsmen.

Nor does the image seem particularly likely to reprise very closely whatever images of Jerusalem may have appeared in the illustrated itineraries, guidebooks or maps of the city and its surroundings often – perfectly plausibly – supposed to have been in use in the 6th century.¹⁰ Surely the two principal *cardines* and the two great church-complexes attached to the *cardo maximus*, along with the massive Church of Holy Zion on its commanding hilltop location, would have been the features of the city which those unfamiliar with its topography would have least needed a map to find. Even if we wished to imagine the existence of a map/itinerary designed to guide visitors only to a very few, especially prominent and accessible religious landmarks, the ostentatious depiction of the colonnades along the two *cardines* would remain perplexing. These features would have contributed nothing to the functionality of the hypothetical original as a street-plan, and they occupy an inordinate amount of the available pictorial space, which might otherwise have been devoted to more revealing depictions of useful landmarks or points of interest; they do little, in short, except to proclaim the beauty and grandeur of the city’s two main streets and their adjoining monuments, which would hardly have needed proclaiming to anyone experiencing Jerusalem in person.

The vignettes as urban vision

What the urban vision of the Madaba mosaicist(s) would have done, quite successfully, is capture the feeling of entering Jerusalem, beginning with the imposing gate in the bristling circuit of walls that defined the image of the city from without, and proceeding through the most monumental and visible section of its urban armature, along the majestic, colonnaded avenue that channelled traffic to the largest, most venerated, and most symbolically-significant intramural edifices (cf. the extremely perceptive discussion in Pullan 1999, 165–68). The same can be said for the Alexandria mosaic at St John in Gerasa, for

all that it belongs to a distinctly different stylistic tradition (long ago defined by Biebel as rooted in “landscape”, as opposed to the “cartographic” idiom of the Madaba Map, Biebel 1938, esp. 351). Yet in my view, the underlying similarities are much more compelling than the superficial stylistic variations. Both vignettes capture the essence of the sensory experience of two of the greatest 6th-century metropolises, what we might call their “cognitive geography,” by means of an urban vision distilled into a topographical sequence of a city-wall and gates, opening onto a primary, colonnaded avenue along which clustered a critical mass of monumental structures, primarily churches.

Hence, I find it difficult to think of these mosaic-vignettes as particularly idealized or abstract, because they partake of the same vision of the city that manifestly occupied the minds of the leading architects of urban topography in the 6th century: the Byzantine emperors, provincial governors and bishops who planned, coordinated and funded the vast majority of important public architectural commissions, as they had since the later 3rd century (on the origins of this profoundly important development, see *inter alia* Lepelley 1999; Bransbourg 2008). These leaders were willing and able to translate their idea of what a capital city should be – their idealized or abstract visions, as it were – into architectonic reality, a topographical ensemble defined with remarkable consistency, from the later 3rd century through (at least) the 6th, by the very sequence of features visible in the mosaics at Gerasa and Madaba: a city-wall and gates, opening onto a primary, colonnaded avenue along which clustered a preponderance of monumental structures, primarily churches, along with the official residences (palaces, *praetoria*) of bishops and leading government officials. From Rome, Milan, Trier, Ravenna and Split in the west, to Thessalonika, Nicomedia, Ephesos and Antioch in the east, where one or two colonnaded thoroughfares and their architectural appendages came in late antiquity to shape the contours of the urban fabric to an unprecedented extent, this same, basic sequence repeated itself again and again.¹¹

The same applies *a fortiori* to Constantinople, the archetypal example of the late antique capital, where Constantine availed himself of what was essentially a topographical blank slate, onto which he mapped out the paradigm of the imperial residence he sought to create. In essence, the city was conceived as a monumental itinerary, focused on the colonnaded expanse of the Mese and its adjacent structures, including all the forum complexes erected by Constantine and his successors over the course of the 4th and 5th centuries, and culminating at the imperial palace and the cathedral churches of Hagia Eirene and (later) Hagia Sophia, along and through which

emperors and patriarchs staged their most dramatic and visible public appearances (Krautheimer 1983, 40–67; Diefenbach 2002; Bauer 2008).

Among the other leading metropolises of the eastern Mediterranean in the 6th century, Alexandria and Jerusalem occupied a place second only to Constantinople in the ecclesiastical hierarchy; extensively patronized by the imperial family in the capital (on imperial patronage in Jerusalem, see Sivan 2008, 187–229; for Alexandria, McKenzie 2007, 240–51), they bustled with resident and visiting dignitaries and countless numbers of pilgrims and religious tourists, who circulated amongst opulent shrines connected by grand processional avenues, where the resident patriarchs staged the solemn festivals and magnificent parades that most visibly proclaimed the glory of the church and awed the masses of the faithful.¹²

The representations of Jerusalem at Madaba and Alexandria at Gerasa, in sum, capture the most salient features of both places, the parts of the city designed to be most visible and most frequented, and thus to embody an urban paradigm shaped by a lasting and extremely consistent “idea” of what a great city should appear to be. In a more general sense, the prevalence of this colonnaded armature in leading cities throughout the eastern Mediterranean and beyond should help to explain why the iconographical trope of the gate and the colonnaded street became as common as it did in Late Antiquity,¹³ though the correspondence between image and reality is often harder to determine, at least to modern eyes. Many of the extant examples are much less detailed and more schematized than the two discussed above, such that the summary evocation of a wall and gate, leading to a colonnade, seems often little more than a stylized ideogram or symbol for “city” or “town”. The Madaba Map features several such images, alongside others which approach the level of detail given for Jerusalem; and others appear, for example, alongside Alexandria at St John in Gerasa.¹⁴

The broader issue at hand involves the topographical accuracy of urban vignettes in general. Duval has extensively analyzed the mosaic cityscapes at the two places where they appear in greatest profusion, the Madaba Map itself and the 8th-century church of St Stephen at Umm al-Rasas, and professed himself sceptical about a direct correspondence between image and reality in all but a small minority of instances.¹⁵

In the latter case, he based himself on the fact that the representations of most of the 17 cities shown – none of which are identical – share no distinctive features with images of the same places in other churches at Madaba and Ma’in, which suggested to him that the mosaicists employed essentially arbitrary “urban”

signifiers for these places (Duval 1994, 201). Yet as Bowersock has replied, the fact that late antique mosaicists in Jordan and Palestine singled out different features of local cities might better be taken to mean that various artists simply chose to represent various landmarks, any and all of which might well have been recognizable to contemporary audiences (Bowersock 2006, 79–81). In the case of St Stephen, with exceptions such as Jerusalem, Neapolis/Nablus, Caesarea Maritima¹⁶ and Umm al-Rasas/Kastron Mefaa itself, which clearly do evoke the places they represent, we simply do not possess enough topographical knowledge to cross-reference effectively the sites with their mosaic depictions. All the same, my sense is that many other urban vignettes, at Umm al-Rasas and beyond (notably the acropolis church at Ma'in),¹⁷ “quoted” recognizable topographical features, though Duval is undoubtedly right that generic urban symbolism did prevail in many cases, including many of the settlements indicated on the Madaba map by means of a simple circuit-wall or a single building.

With regard to the gates opening onto colonnaded streets often employed even in more schematic depictions of particularly important cities, however, leading political and ecclesiastical capitals above all, we might posit a kind of *a priori* connection with the built environment. Here I invoke two mosaic images of Jerusalem created at Rome between the 5th and the 7th centuries, which were clearly inspired by the vision of Heavenly Jerusalem described in the Book of the Apocalypse (21.10ff.), with its prepossessing jewelled circuit of walls. The first, from ca. 440, appears in the spandrel of the triumphal arch at Santa Maria Maggiore (Plate 24); the second is identically situated on the triumphal arch at the oratory of San Vincenzo, constructed adjacent to the Lateran Baptistery in the 640s (Plate 25). A glance at both images will suffice to indicate the extent to which the concept of a colonnaded street defined the mosaicists’ conception of the intramural topography of the city, albeit in stylistically different ways. The presence of the Anastasis Rotunda in the Jerusalem vignette at Santa Maria Maggiore, moreover, suggests a direct link with the architecture of the earthly city, albeit a generic one, as the rotunda is one of the most ubiquitous tropes used to represent Jerusalem throughout Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages (see generally Gatti Perer 1983; Casartelli Novelli 2000). The colonnaded *cardo*, too, might be characterized as a trope; certainly there is no need to imagine that the creators of the two mosaics had any firsthand experience of the city, as undoubtedly the vast majority of the people who saw them did not.

In the end, the distinction between real places and these same places as imagined, idealized or conceptualized by artists and patrons

can become blurred beyond resolution, probably as much for late antique “users of images” as for modern scholars, who must often, indeed, have a more accurate sense of urban topography in, e.g., Jerusalem than the many ancient artists, patrons and viewers who experienced the city only through images such as those at Rome. But this is precisely the point: what late antique audiences manifestly did know, or expect, of a great metropolis was the presence of a few features that are nearly as ubiquitous in art as they were on the ground. For all that the images of Jerusalem in Rome reproduce the built environment rather less punctiliously than those of Alexandria at St John and Jerusalem at Madaba (where the geographical proximity between the places themselves and the sites where they are represented is much closer), the essential urban matrix they present – or, we might say, the experience of the physical environment they transmit – is effectively identical: a gate in a circuit-wall, opening onto a colonnaded avenue that becomes the focal point of the urban experience. It is a perceptual experience that corresponded, on an elemental level, with urban reality.

But why are cityscapes such a common feature of church-decoration, from Italy to the Levant, from the 5th century on?¹⁸ Notwithstanding the fact that churches are often better-preserved and more extensively studied (and excavated) than other building-types, it is surely significant that not a single comparably detailed urban vignette has turned up amongst the extensive corpus of figural mosaics known from domestic contexts of the same period, as far as I know.¹⁹ A satisfying response would require a dedicated study extending well beyond the scope of the present one. My sense is that for the leaders of the church as well as the masses of the faithful in the regions where such images proliferated in Late Antiquity, the essence of Christian community in the present world would have been inconceivable without the underlying physical and conceptual structures of the urban environment. The hierarchy of the church was inextricably linked to urban centres where bishops resided and the relics of martyrs increasingly collected. The ideal embodiment of Christian society was the promised city to come, the Heavenly Jerusalem that would descend to Earth upon the second coming of Christ (Christie 1979; Saradi 2006, 120). In the meanwhile, the best hope of the lay faithful resided in the terrestrial cities that might serve at least as pale reflections of heavenly community, as Jerusalem once had – to an unparalleled extent – in the days of the Apostles (cf. Marcus 1990, 157–98). Earthly cities were to redound to the glory of God; and the crowning jewels of those cities were the churches where the faithful most closely approached the sublime, with glittering visions of cities hovering before their eyes.²⁰

In the final assessment, I would suggest that the urban images discussed above were not so much meant to guide the steps of pilgrims, nor to instruct the faithful in narrow points of doctrine or scriptural exegesis, as to comfort and reinforce their sense of belonging to a Christian world-order that stretched (nearly) as far as the eye could see, or the mind could reach (cf. Shahid 1999; Gatier 1999; Pullan 1999, 169; Bowersock 2006, 28–29). The cityscape vignettes are the ultimate testament to the enduring legacy of late antique urban culture, of which the church was part and parcel. The glory of the church was the glory of the cities, which were in turn the *sine qua non* of terrestrial Christendom, in the eyes of an urbane populace still unable to imagine any state of being, in this world or the next, that did not unfold among the circuit-walls, colonnaded streets and shrines of the late antique metropolis.

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1 The cities along the north side of the nave, all located west of the River Jordan, proceed in descending order from Jerusalem to Neapolis, Sebastis, Caesarea Maritima, Diospolis, Eleutheropolis, Ashkelon and Gaza. Along the south colonnade are seven cities situated east of the Jordan, beginning with *Kastron Mefa'a*, followed by Philadelphia/Amman, Madaba, Esbunta, Belemunta/Ma'in, Areopolis, and Charachmoba. The local villages of Limbon and Diblaton at the east end of the two side aisles are juxtaposed with donor portraits, accompanied by inscriptions.

2 While I say “receding,” the mosaicist has actually employed a sort of inverse linear perspective: the columns appear to grow, rather than diminish, with increasing distance from the gateway, though they are unquestionably meant to be understood as receding into the urban interior.

3 See, e.g., Ausonius, *Ordo nobilium urbium*, 1–5. Jerusalem's rise to prominence was definitively sealed by its promotion to patriarchal eminence at Chalcedon in 451; cf. Flusin 2004, 132–41.

4 *SS. Cyri et Joannis miracula* (PG 87.3, col. 3460d): καὶ τοῦ τεμένους ἐξίῳν, ἐν τῷ δρόμῳ παράμεινον τόπος οὗτος ἐπίσημος τῆς Ἀλεξανδρέων καθέστηκεν πόλεως, ἐκ λεωφόρου σχήματος κείμενος, ἐμβόλοις μὲν δυσὶν μεσούμενος, καὶ κίοσι καὶ μαρμαροῖς κοσμούμενος, λεῶν τε στενοχωρούμενος πλείονι, καὶ τοῖς ἐν αγοραῖς παντοδαποῖς πρατηρίοις βριθόμενος.

5 See Theophylact Simocatta, *Historiae* 8.13.10 (in reference to events in 602): “In

the middle of the night then, as he was approaching the city's Tycheum, as it is called (this is a famous place in Alexandria) ..." (trans. Whitby 1986, 231); cf. McKenzie 2007, 245–46. On the circular form of the Tycheum, known only through literary and numismatic sources, see McKenzie 2007, 39, 187–88.

6 Biebel was far too hasty in downplaying the individuality of the features shown at Alexandria, which as he acknowledged differ markedly from those of the adjacent vignettes, such as Memphis (1938, 349); and he ignores the colonnaded avenue entirely.

7 Which was – significantly – perceived to lie "in the middle of the city," according to the 4th-century Coptic *Life* of Macarius (cited in McKenzie 2007, 244 n. 61; cf. *ibid.* 15).

8 The pictorial perspective of the mosaic matches its topographical orientation, with east lying toward the oriented apse of the church; those entering the nave and heading in the direction of the apse would thus have experienced the geographical panorama from the perspective of one arriving in the Levant from the Mediterranean. The map spanned the entirety of the 16-m width of the church, but its fragmentary state and the absence of clear traces of its extension along the east–west axis of the nave allow only the southern extent of its coverage to be fixed with any certainty, where the mosaic abuts the south wall of the church just beyond the Nile Delta. While the notion that the map restricted its coverage to "Bible lands" remains widely accepted, as (*inter alia*) Avi-Yonah claimed in his much-cited study (1954), there is no proof whatsoever that sites outside of the Levant were not included, as others have noted (e.g. Gatier 1986, 178). Observers of the map in the late-19th century, before much of it was destroyed, indeed claimed that its coverage extended as far as Constantinople; cf. Piccirillo 1999b, 28; Bowersock 2006, 17.

9 On the identification of these features – as well as generally more speculative proposals for the individuation of numerous ancillary structures – see Tsafir 1999; on the churches, see also Ovadiah 1999.

10 Tsafir, for example, is convinced that the Madaba Map, and the image of Jerusalem in particular, was based primarily on a widely-circulated map used by pilgrims to the Holy Land and/or their guides, though he is of course well aware that no direct traces of such a document survive; see Tsafir 1986, esp. 140; cf. Tsafir 1999, 158. The related notion that manuscript illustrations regularly inspired mosaicists, which owes much to the enduring influence of Kurt Weitzmann (see esp. Weitzmann 1975), has recently been elegantly questioned by Bowersock, with particular reference to the Jordanian cityscape-mosaics (Bowersock 2006, 79–80; cf. also 53–54). As for written sources, the *Onomasticon* of Eusebius, often – *faute de mieux* – claimed to be the primary textual inspiration of the map, does nothing to explain the depiction of Jerusalem; and scholars would likely do better to admit that attempts to establish the primacy of any text among the hypothetical sources of the map as a whole is largely futile (compare, for example, Bowersock's [2006, 17–19] rebuttal of the traditional view of the importance of the *Onomasticon* [e.g. Donner 1992, 22–24] for a sense of the range of views possible for the influence of this text alone). For more on the sorts of connections often proposed between the Madaba Map and the cartographic and literary tradition, see also the contributions of Weber, Harvey, Di Segni and Giversen, in Piccirillo and Alliata (eds.) 1999.

11 A full statement of my views on this topic, and the evidence upon which they are based, will have to await the publication of my book *The Afterlife of the Roman City. Architecture and Ceremony in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (forthcoming from Cambridge University Press). The grand, processional way, flanked on both sides with continuous colonnades and conceived as the architectural and ceremonial centerpiece of the Greco-Roman city, only became widespread in the first two centuries (MacDonald 1986, 32–51; Bejor 1999). From the 3rd century on,

however, in all of the cities previously cited and others besides, such grandiose avenues, along with the buildings directly attached to them, consumed an ever-increasing proportion of the limited pool of resources available for urban public building, often to the relative neglect of more peripheral areas of the city-centre. For an intimation of such themes in the existing literature, see Lavan 2003; Lavan 2008.

12 On the processional ceremonies, above all imperial *adventus* and its ecclesiastical derivatives, which increasingly defined the tenor of public life and the display of sovereign power in Late Antiquity, see MacCormack 1981; McCormick 1986; Dufraigne 1994.

13 The trope of a circuit-wall is of course a feature of city-depictions long before Late Antiquity (on Classical, Hellenistic and Roman antecedents, see, e.g., Biebel 1938, 342–54; on Late Antiquity, Saradi 2006, 120–44), and colonnaded streets or porticoes occur as well, as for example in the recently discovered city-fresco from the Oppian Hill in Rome (La Rocca 2000). However, from the later 3rd century, such streets and the monumental structures annexed to them loomed larger than ever before – in both popularity and visual/conceptual prominence – in literary and visual representations of cities, not coincidentally as they became increasingly prominent in topographical reality.

14 Other cities on the Madaba Map embellished with more schematic hints of colonnaded streets – all of which nonetheless differ in their details, and distinguish these places from cities of similar size identified by means of other features – include Charachmoba, Eleutheropolis (where only part of the main street is lined with columns, a suggestive detail), Diospolis/Lod, Azotus Paralus/Ashdod and Athribis. Neapolis/Nablus, Ashkelon, Gaza and Pelusium all feature strikingly prominent depictions of colonnaded streets that recall the image of Jerusalem (all of these images can be consulted on the Franciscans' very useful website: <http://www.christusrex.org/www1/ofm/mad/index.html>). In every case, I think the likeliest assumption is that a conscious effort was made to capture recognizable features of these places; cf. Pullan 1999, 166. At St John, a colonnade occurs in the gateway of the vignette of Memphis (Piccirillo 1993, fig. 543 on p. 289), which seems to distinguish itself from the more prominent image of the Canopic Way at Alexandria, as it appears only in the gateway and not among the intramural monuments of the city.

15 For the 123 urban vignettes Duval identified in his exhaustive analysis of the surviving portions of the Madaba Map, he concluded “il n'existe que 16 villes dont la représentation est nettement individualisée et 10 sanctuaires ou curiosités géographiques qui possèdent au moins un symbole propre,” which led him to the further conclusion that “Au total, les conventions de la représentation architecturale traditionnelle dans l'Antiquité tardive expliquent 90% des vignettes de la carte. Un soupçon de réalisme ou une volonté d'individualisation marquent une vingtaine d'images” (Duval 1999, 145). Deckers (1988) is still more sceptical in concluding that nearly all such city-images were simply schematized “pictograms” divorced from topographical reality.

16 Though nobody seems yet to have noticed it, the central-plan building that dominates the image of Caesarea almost certainly depicts the great octagonal church built ca. 500 in the most prominent location in the city, the temple platform overlooking the harbour; on the church, see Stabler and Holum 2008, 23–30.

17 I cannot imagine why the mosaicists at St George would have based themselves on reality in the four cases identified above, and not in most or all of the remaining 13; the burden of proof surely rests with those who wish to maintain such a position.

18 Additional examples from Italy, all of which look extremely similar to the two discussed above, minus the street-colonnade, include the representations of

Jerusalem and Bethlem at S. Lorenzo in Rome, from the late 6th century; and the depictions of the same cities in Sant'Apollinare in Classe (early 6th century) and San Vitale (mid-6th century) at Ravenna.

¹⁹ This is of course an impression based on less-than-universal knowledge of all documented late antique mosaics; I would be very pleased to learn of examples to the contrary, which would nonetheless, I am certain, account for a tiny fraction of all known urban vignettes.

²⁰ Among which the “home city” in which the image appeared was often given particular prominence, as Umm al-Rasas/Kastron Mefaa was at St Stephen and Madaba (probably) was in the map mosaic: for this continuing, very traditional aspect of inter-urban competition as a (partial) explanation for the purpose of these collections of urban vignettes, see Gatier 1999.

CITY PERSONIFICATIONS IN LATE ANTIQUITY

Birte Poulsen

Personifications of cities (and of provinces) have a long history in Greek and Roman art and literature.¹ For many centuries Roma was the dominant city goddess in the Mediterranean world, but this superiority changed definitively with the creation of Constantinopolis, representing the New Rome, and the increasing importance of other Mediterranean cities such as Alexandria and Antioch. Images of new abstract personifications including multiple *tychae* are a characteristic of late antique imagery. The importance of these *tychae* is underscored by the fact that many of them were still recipients of cult during Late Antiquity. According to Malalas (*Chronographia* 13.7 [Dindorf 1831, 320]) and *Chronicon Paschale* (Dindorf 1832, I, 528); Vickers 1986, 301), Constantine sacrificed to Tyche of Constantinopolis in 328, and so later did the emperor Julian (Bassett 2004, 156 citing Zosimos II.32 and Socrates III.11). Statues of the *tyche* of Constantinopolis were still common in the urban landscape of Constantinople as late as the 9th century (Vickers 1986, 302, nos. 14–16). According to the written tradition, the Tycheion in Alexandria still existed in AD 602.²

Urban vignettes with highly simplified representations of cities – preserved first and foremost in mosaic floors in the eastern part of the Mediterranean – certainly demonstrate a strong focus on urban identity in Late Antiquity. These vignettes seem to have been preserved exclusively in churches and other public monuments (for references, see Dey in this volume). Representations of city personifications, as opposed to vignettes, have however also survived in domestic contexts; but while images of city personifications seem intelligible in the context of public and civic monuments, their use in domestic contexts seems less obviously explicable. In the following I will therefore focus on one or more city personifications preserved

first and foremost in mosaics, and discuss the use of these images. The advantage of studying these personifications represented in mosaic floors is that the mosaics are usually preserved *in situ* and the contexts therefore usually clear. As the total number of city personifications in mosaics is relatively small in comparison to that of late antique personifications and allegorical representations in general, I will include a small number of city representations from other visual media in order to contextualize the use of city personifications in mosaic floors. A critical survey of surviving images in mosaics will show that the number of personifications is smaller than has sometimes been argued. My point of departure will be the representations of three *tychae* revealed in a late antique house in Halikarnassos.

City personifications in Halikarnassos

In December 1856 Newton excavated a part of what he called a “Roman Villa” in ancient Halikarnassos (Newton 1862, 280–310; Hinks 1933, 125–43). Almost all the rooms of this villa had mosaic floors, many of which were figural. Some of the mosaics were lifted out and taken to the British Museum, where they are on display today; others were photographed by Corporal B. Spackman and left *in situ*. Further rooms of this “Roman Villa” were revealed during the Danish-Turkish excavations in 1990–1993, and this part also included several rooms with mosaics, as well as an apsidal room with an inscription in a *tabula ansata* placed immediately in front of the apse (for preliminary reports and plan, see Poulsen 1994; 1995; 1997; 2011; 2012; cf. also Scheibelreiter-Gail 2011, 270–78, fig. 278–80). The inscription states that the decoration of the house, called *domos*, was paid for by a certain Charidemos, who was probably its owner (Isager 1995; 1997). Unfortunately Charidemos is otherwise unknown to us, but from its ornamentation the house certainly seems to have belonged to a wealthy and educated aristocrat of late antique Halikarnassos. On the basis of the inscription and the style of the mosaics, the construction of the “House of Charidemos” is dated to around the mid-5th century.

In one of the northern rooms, Room E, Newton uncovered a mosaic with three city personifications: those of Halikarnassos, Alexandria and Berytos (Fig. 11.1; Newton 1862, 288–89; Hinks 1933, no. 53, fig. 153; Poulsen 1997). For reasons unknown, Newton was unable to excavate the northern part of room E, with the result that the total design of the mosaic floor remains obscure. According to Newton, the decorative scheme of room E was limited to an oblong compartment,

with the busts of three city personifications placed in medallions in the southern part of the room (Newton 1862, 289–90). One of the three medallions contained in this mosaic floor – the personification of Halikarnassos – was removed and transferred to the British Museum (H. 0.545, W. 0.495 m: Hinks 1933, no. 53; Cahn 1988, 407, no. 1; Rochetti 1958, 253, fig. 366). The other two city personifications were until recently known only through Newton’s descriptions but illustrations of these two personifications subsequently came to light among the comprehensive photographic documentation of ancient Halikarnassos in the British Library. These photographs show the mosaic floor still *in situ* during Newton’s excavations of the site. Judging from the photos, the mosaic in Room E was still in an excellent state of preservation at the time (Poulsen 1997, figs. 6–8).

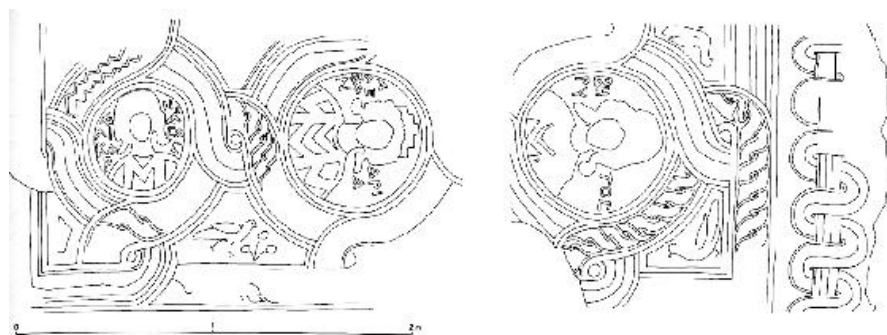


Fig. 11.1 Drawing of the city personifications of Room E in the house of Charidemos, Halikarnassos (I. Bjerg Poulsen).

According to Newton, the design of the mosaic floor consisted of an oblong compartment bounded by a frame formed by the interlacing of a guilloche plait (4.267 m E–W and 1.902 m N–S: Newton 1862, 289–90). These interlacings were continued from the frame and over the inner area of the compartment in order to form three loops, within each of which was a circular medallion. The medallion on the west represented a female bust: on either side of the head was inscribed ΑΛΙΚΑΡΝΑΣΣΟΣ, and the head was surmounted by an indefinable headgear, coloured crimson (Poulsen 1997, fig. 6, pl. 1.2). The tunic was light blue, bordered with black, with two parallel vertical stripes in orange down the breast. In the central medallion (Poulsen 1997, fig. 7) was a female bust around whose head was inscribed the name ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΙΑ. The head was turreted, and on the shoulders there is a tunic ornamented with two parallel vertical stripes, between which were zigzag lines. According to the inscription, the medallion to the east represented the city of ΒΕΡΥΤΟΣ (Beirut) (Poulsen 1997, fig. 8). This female head was also surmounted by a crimson headgear. The

tunic was ornamented with vertical and zigzag stripes similar to that of Halikarnassos (according to Newton 1862, 289, she is wearing a mitre like Halikarnassos). A drawing (Fig. 11.1) of the details of the compartment has been made on the basis of the photographic documentation. Newton mentions neither the differing sizes of the medallions (though this is apparent from his ground plan) nor the orientation of the personifications contained within them. The most surprising and important feature revealed by the photographic documentation is that the medallions containing the city personifications were oriented differently. It appears that Halikarnassos was placed with her head to the north, the other two with their heads to the east.

With the exception of Alexandria, none of the three *tychae* are characterized by any specific attributes of the cities they personify: their identity is revealed only by their accompanying inscriptions. Alexandria (Rocchetti 1958, 217–18; Jentel 1981, 490, no. 28) is wearing a turreted crown Newton – a “lighthouse” with three storeys, which is also the headgear of the late antique silver statuette of Alexandria from the Esquiline Treasure (see below). While there are no other known depictions of the personification of Halikarnassos, Berytos is known from two other depictions, one on the base of Porphyrios (see below) and one on coinage showing a female head with a mural crown on the obverse (Wallbrecher 1997, no. 3: late 2nd or 1st century BC).

City personifications of Kos(?), Constantinopolis, and Paphos

In 1984 a single personification was found in what is presumed to have been a private house in the city of Kos (Brouscari 1997, figs. 3–5, 9, pl. III.1–2; De Matteis 2004, 180). The house also contained further rooms with mosaics, dated by finds below the mosaic to the first half of the 5th century. The best preserved mosaic floor shows the upper half of a female figure, placed in a medallion. She is holding a cornucopia with grapes, an ear of corn, and pomegranates, and wears a turreted crown. She is apparently wearing a chiton, and a himation covers her left shoulder and arm. It appears that the Koan mosaic worker was not very successful in translating the prototype into mosaic, as he has misunderstood both the garments and the various body elements of the goddess. Unfortunately the goddess is not characterized either by additional attributes or an inscription, but none the less the excavator, E. Brouscari, has called her a city personification. Neither the remains of an inscription, ΦΙΛΟΚΑΛΕ, in

the mosaic nor the known representations of the *tyche* of Kos on coins from the mid-3rd century are of much help here (Philippus 244–249). The coin shows the goddess standing, holding a spear or a sceptre in her right hand and a cornucopia in her left (*BMC Caria* nos. 216–218, pl. 33.8, nos. 220, 251, pl. 33.13). This iconography (the cornucopia and the turreted crown) does not contradict an identification of the female goddess as the *tyche* of the city of Kos.³

A further city personification is recorded as found in a mosaic in Kos, but it has never been published (Laurenzi 1936–1937, 141; Morricone 1950, 320; Brouscari 1997, 73. Dated to the 4th century). This is described as a city personification, wearing a turreted crown and holding a bunch of grapes, but is identified with Constantinopolis (!). Four busts of women within octagons in a mosaic found on Chios have likewise been called city personifications, but since these figures do not seem to wear mural crowns and lack other attributes or inscriptions, the identification is difficult (Assimakopoulou-Atzaka 1991, 58, fig. 12; Brouskari 1997, 73).

A mosaic whose provenance and present location are both unfortunately unknown has a remarkable and unique representation (measure 1.67 × 2.01 m: Michaelides 2005, 401–3, fig. 4; 2009). Only this fragment of an original larger panel is known, and it shows four female figures on either side of a small altar, while to the left a small part of a further human figure may be distinguished. The two female figures to the right are both haloed, and identified by inscriptions above their heads. Near the altar is a half-seated Paphos (ΠΑΦΟΣ) with a turreted crown, and at her left stands Kypros (ΚΥΠΡΟΣ), crowned by a modius or a calathos. The two figures to the left of the altar have been interpreted as *horai*, and D. Michelides relates this representation to the Homeric Hymns (6.1–18, or possibly 5.58–68). The first of these passages is a description of Aphrodite's arrival at Cyprus, and the mosaic would thus represent this famous myth, showing Aphrodite being received by Paphos on the island of Cyprus, in which one of her most famous sanctuaries was situated. The mosaic has been dated to the late 3rd – early 4th century. Unfortunately the original context of the mosaic is unknown, and it has been convincingly argued that it does not originate from Cyprus, but more probably from Syria or the region immediately to the north. In this case the personifications of Paphos and Cyprus were perhaps only depicted as a reference to the place in which the famous myth about the birth of Aphrodite took place.

City personifications in mosaics in the Near East

The closest parallel as to number of the representations in Halikarnassos is preserved in a floor mosaic as far away as the town of Madaba in Jordan (measure 7.3 × 9.5 m: Piccirillo 1989, 41–66; Piccirillo 1993, 51–65; Bühl 1995, 120, fig. 62; Bowersock 2006, 8, fig. 1.3 and 82, fig. 3.10). A late antique building incorporated into the foundations of the Church of the Virgin contains a large room with a beautiful floor mosaic with mythological representations of Phaedra and Hippolytos and Aphrodite and Adonis. In addition to the representations of female seasons (with turreted crowns) in the corners of the elaborate border, the mosaic is also adorned with the personifications of three cities, placed close to the entrance of the room. The deities are all enthroned, and all hold sceptres in their right hands. They are identified by inscriptions: from left to right, ΡΩΜΗ, ΓΡΗΓΟΡΙΑ and ΜΗΔΑΒΑ. Whereas Gregoria and Madaba are wearing mural crowns, Roma is wearing a peculiar type of headgear which does not look like the usual helmet so typical for the iconography of Roma (Toynbee 1947; 1953). All three figures are clad in tunic and cloak; Gregoria and Roma also wear earrings. Gregoria is supporting in her left hand a basket containing flowers, Roma a cornucopia containing fruit, and Madaba a cornucopia containing fruit and ears of corn. As in the decorative programme of room E of the House of Charidemus in Halikarnassos, a personification of a local city, Madaba, is grouped together with two cities of the late antique world: the metropolis Roma and another otherwise unknown city, Gregoria.

A few years ago Glen Bowersock suggested that Gregoria should be interpreted as the city of the patriarch Gregorius, namely Antioch (Bowersock 2006, 8–9, 81–88). It has been observed that only the representation of Gregoria among the city personifications has lines indicated below her feet, and this has been taken to be a reference to the rock upon which she was seated, which corresponds well with the known iconography of Antioch.⁴ What is perhaps strange is that the city of Rome should be represented in a Near Eastern context in a period in which Rome has basically lost her importance. It has therefore been suggested that this personification should rather be identified as the New Rome, i.e. Constantinopolis (Bowersock 2006, 84–85). This interpretation would correspond much better to such elements of the iconography as the cornucopia, although we should then have expected a mural crown – or a helmet (see below). Unlike that of Halikarnassos, the *tyche* of Madaba is known from coins minted during the Severan period (Piccirillo 1989, 65, note 48; Spijkerman 1978, 180–85, pls. 39–40), where she is shown standing, with her left foot perhaps on a ship's prow. She wears a turreted crown and holds a cornucopia in her left hand. In her right hand she holds an uncertain object, which on some coinage seems similar to a small bust.

Unfortunately there is no evidence concerning the function of the building containing the representations of Madaba, Gregoria and Roma. As regards the date of the mosaic floor, the Church of the Vergin in Madaba constitutes a *terminus ante quem* since it incorporated the mosaic into its foundations some time during the second half of the 6th century, and the mosaic floor has accordingly been dated to the first half of the 6th century (which seems probable on stylistic grounds) (Piccirillo 1989, 58–60).

According to some scholars, four figures on the mosaic floor of the Church of the Priest Wa'il in Umm er-Rasas in Jordan may represent seasons or city personifications (Piccirillo 1993, 242–43, figs. 396–97; Bowersock 2006, 83, fig. 3.11); but I am convinced that they should rather be interpreted as personifications of rivers. The dedicatory inscription shows that this mosaic was dedicated in AD 586. Unfortunately the mosaic has fallen victim to extensive damage by iconoclasts, but it seems that busts “of four women” are depicted in the south-western intercolumnar border. Three are fully preserved, but only the elbow for the fourth figure. It appears that each figure is holding a cornucopia in its left arm, and they are placed next to vignettes of cities. Although the heads and the greater part of the busts have been destroyed, it can be seen that the busts are naked except for a cloak or himation draped over their right arm and shoulder, and water seems to be pouring out of the cornucopia. Michele Piccirillo identified the four busts with female seasons. Bowersock (2006, 83) was likewise convinced that the four busts were female, and considered them to be city personifications, placed next to the cities to which they were related. However, although the cornucopiae would be adequate for the iconography of some city personifications, the nakedness as well as the water pouring from the cornucopiae would be entirely unusual for city personifications of this period. Furthermore, if particular cities were intended here, inscriptions, a common feature in this region, would surely have been added as well.⁵ As in the city personifications in Madaba, the female figures of this period are always draped, and it therefore seems that the naked busts may rather belong to male figures. A very good parallel for this type of male bust with cornucopia is at hand in the Church of Bishop Sergius, also in Umm er-Rasas.⁶ Due to the steps that lay above it, this figure was spared by the iconoclasts. It is clearly a male bust, with a cloak or himation draped over his right arm and shoulder. He is holding a cornucopia in his left arm, and from this shoots the wine scroll that forms the border. Traces seem to indicate that similar male busts were placed in the other three corners of the border.

The nakedness and the water from the cornucopia would, however,

be highly unusual for female seasons in Late Antiquity. The recent discovery of similar personifications in Hadrianupolis in Paphlagonia (Pataci *et al.* 2012, 168–69, fig. 6; Laflı and Zäh 2008, 694–99, pls. XXI–XXII, figs. 23–28) indeed confirms that the personifications in Umm er-Rasas should rather be interpreted as river gods. A panel in front of the apse of the Late Antique church B (dated to 5th–6th century) shows the busts of four male figures, all carrying cornucopiae in their left arms from which water is pouring. The busts are naked but for a cloak draped over the left shoulder, and they also wear a type of Phrygian hat. These figures may be safely identified as rivers because of the inscriptions placed to the left of their heads: Geon, Phison, Tigris and Euphrates. Personifications of rivers are a frequent motif in churches (for instance the Church of the Rivers, Piccirillo 1993, 240–41, fig. 390; for personifications of rivers of Roman Antioch, see Huskinson 2005).

Two additional single personifications are known from mosaic floors in the Near East. However, as neither of these have accompanying inscriptions, their identification as city personifications seems unsure, as in the Kos example. We should perhaps identify them rather as representations of Fortuna/Tyche bringing good luck and fertility in a more general sense. One was found in *Maison du Cerf* in Apamea (Donnay-Rocmans and Donnay 1984; Balty 1994; 1997, pl. VI. 1). In the mosaic of Room A the bust of a goddess is represented with a mural crown above a wreath of grapes. She is holding a cornucopia in her left hand and flowers (?) in her raised right hand. She is clad in a chiton, and in the fold created by the himation she carries fruits. The mosaics of this house are dated to the 5th or 6th century. A further bust of a female figure in a medallion has been found in ancient Skythopolis-Beth Shean. The mosaic was presumably situated in a civic context, the area of the so-called *sigma*, an exedra-formed place dated to the early 6th century (Foerster and Tsafirir 1987, 19, Ph. 9; Tsafirir and Foerster 1997, 130, fig. 42). Like the goddess in Apamea and like the figure in Kos, the female figure is depicted within a medallion. She is richly dressed and wears a mural crown. In her left hand she holds a cornucopia with fruits, and on top of it is a miniature palm tree. The latter is a local touch, and this may perhaps indicate that the goddess should be considered as a representation of the city in which she was depicted.

City personifications in mosaics of the western empire

Representations of city personifications in mosaics are rare in the

western Mediterranean region, but the city personification of Carthage may appear on two mosaics from that city.⁷ A polychrome mosaic dated to the first quarter of the 4th century shows a haloed female figure standing in front of a horse. She holds twigs in both hands (Vollkommer 1986, no. 6; Dunbabin 1978, 253, no. 33d (ii)). More probable is the identification of a female represented on another polychrome mosaic found in the city (now in Musée du Louvre: Vollkommer 1986, no. 7; Dunbabin 1978, 251, no. 11; Parrish 1984, 128–31, no. 16, pl. 25–26; Bühl 1995, 281–83, figs. 141–42). It shows a woman standing between torches, clad in tunic and palla. She is holding twigs or plants in her hands, and originally she wore a mural crown which would indeed indicate an interpretation as a city goddess. The mosaic is dated to the 5th or 6th century. To this should be added a mosaic which is known only through a description by Agnellus. It is not known whether the mosaic was on a wall (probably) or a floor, but it included a representation of Theodosius standing between the personifications of Roma and Ravenna (Momigliano 1960, 181–82, see also Malmberg, this volume, 176).

Images of multiple city personifications and their interpretation – an overview

The late antique world had four great *metropoleis* – Rome, Alexandria, Antioch, and Constantinopolis – all presumed to be represented by the four gilded statuettes of the Esquiline treasure (Shelton 1981, 25–26, 86–88, nos. 30–33, pls. 35–43; Jentel 1981, 490, no. 27; Shelton 1985, 152–55; Cameron 1985, 140–41; Bühl 1995, 119–20), although the identification of the four statuettes could only be made on the basis of their attributes alone. Among the great *metropoleis*, Antioch has by far the oldest known iconography, with the creation of the famous *tyche* of Antioch by Eutychides of Sikyon in 300 BC. Antioch's is also the first *tyche* to wear a mural crown (Dohrn 1960; Shelton 1979, 30; Balty 1981). Easily recognizable, likewise, is the personification of Roma, with a helmet rather than a mural crown and depicted with weapons, a spear and a shield. Roma is clad in a peplos, rather than the short Amazonian dress or peplos that leaves one breast bare. Depictions are known from the 3rd century BC (Vermeule 1959; Mellor 1981, 961–64). The iconography of Alexandria was well established from the Hellenistic period: at first shown with a headgear with an elephant's head, she appears for the first time with a turreted crown during the early 1st century BC on coins minted in Rome (A. Aemilius Lepidus, Jentel 1981, 490, no. 29. General: Jentel 1981; Daszewski 1986). The Esquiline Treasure is unusual in showing the

goddess seated, her left foot resting on a ship's prow. The personification of Constantinopolis was of course the last to be created, on the occasion of the consecration of the city on 11 May 330. In some depictions it may be hard to distinguish her from the personification of Rome, since her iconography reflects that of Rome and she is likewise often carrying a helmet. Many representations show her clad in a long tunic and mantle, a turreted crown and a veil, holding a cornucopia and a torch (Toynbee 1947; 1953; Vickers 1986; Bühl 1995, 35–44).

Obviously, depictions of the *tychae* of Roma and Constantinopolis by far outnumber those of the other *metropoleis* in the official imagery, because they are the representatives of West and East (Grig 2012). The personifications of Roma and Constantinopolis were among the emblems of high public office, and they frequently appear on consular diptychs. One of the earliest diptychs in the series, dated to the second decade of the 5th century and perhaps on the occasion of the western consulship of Flavius Constantinus, shows the personifications of Roma and Constantinopolis seated on either side of the two emperors in its upper panel – both haloed, Roma clearly to the left and Constantinopolis with a crown (radiated) to the right.⁸ A second type of diptych shows the two goddesses standing on either side of the designated consul: a good example is the diptych of Orestes, who had the consulate in the West in 530.⁹ On a third type, the same city goddesses are decorating the curule chairs of the consuls: an example is the diptych of Anastasius, the consul of the East in 517 (Delbrueck 1929, no. 19; Bühl 1995, 270–73, figs. 136–37; Stern 1953, 124–44). Finally, the bust of Constantinopolis appears in two upper panels of consular diptychs from about 500 (Milan and Augst, Delbrueck 1929, nos. 49–50; Bühl 1995, 182–96, figs. 95 and 97). The bust of the city goddess appears within an oak wreath supported by victories, and she is wearing a turreted crown and holding a cornucopia and a torch. The latter representation in particular may be compared to the city personifications in the medallions of the mosaics.¹⁰ It seems clear that the two *tychae* of Roma and Constantinopolis at least were associated with the imperial bureaucracy, with high-ranking officials of the government, and with the emperor himself (Shelton 1979; Bühl 1995, 231).

Such a representative or emblematic function has also been suggested for the four silver statuettes of city personifications from the Esquiline Treasure, thought to have been attached to a *sedes gestatoria* (Jentel 1981; Daszewski 1986; Shelton 1979, 34; Weitzmann 1979, 176–77, no. 155; Spätantike 1983, 481–85, nos. 84–85; Bühl 1995, 140–41). The official nature of these four *metropoleis* also indicated by the Peutinger map, on which only Roma, Constantinopolis, Antioch,

and probably also Alexandria are indicated by city personifications (Miller 1916; Levi 1967, 151–59; Bowersock 2006, 20–23).¹¹ On the tabula, all deities are seated on a throne. Roma is depicted with helmet, shield and spear and holds the orb in her right hand (Levi 1967, 152–53, seg. IV; Bowersock 2006, 20, fig. 1.9). Constantinopolis (Levi 1967, 153–54, seg. VIII; Vickers 1986, no. 1; Bowersock 2006, 22, fig. 1.11) is depicted with a double-crested helmet (?) and is holding a spear (and a shield) in her left hand, and she points vividly with her right hand to the statue of the city founder, Constantine, on the column. The representation of Antioch (Miller 1916, XXX (fig.) and XXXII; Levi 1967, 154–56, seg. IX; Balty 1981, no. 131; Bowersock 2006, 21, fig. 1.10; Grig 2012, 48–51), however, differs greatly from the established iconography. She is seated on a throne, she is draped, and she holds a spear in her right hand. The mural crown seems to have been changed into a type of helmet, and awkwardly lying/swimming at her left leg is a small boy, the personification of the Orontes river.

The selection of city personifications is slightly different in another public/civic document, the Valentianus Calendar from 354, the four being Roma, Constantinopolis, Alexandria and Trier, all identified through inscriptions (Stern 1953, 124–44, pls. II–III; Shelton 1979, 34–35; Bühl 1995, 80–86). Only Roma is seated, but again she is wearing a chiton, a cloak and a helmet with three crests, and she holds the orb with a Victoria standing on it in her right hand and a spear in her left. A sack containing at least 400 *denarii*, placed to her left, shows the prosperity of the city, and this sack is bigger and contains more *denarii* than that depicted next to Constantinopolis. The wealth of Roma is further indicated by a small putto standing at her right, pouring coins from a sack on his left shoulder. Roma's superiority is also indicated by the fact that she is seated on a throne, while the others are standing. The standing Constantinopolis is shown with a mural crown, and she holds a spear in her left hand and a wreath in her right. She wears a long chiton and a cloak, and is being crowned by two cupids. Other cupids on either side of her hold torches, presumably referring to her function as a harbour city. A sack containing *denarii* stands to her right. Alexandria, wearing a chiton and a cloak, is crowned by a wreath of ears of corn. In her left hand she holds ears of corn and pomegranates, and perhaps a laurel twig in her right. Two cupids hold torches, referring to the importance of the harbour of the city, and this is further emphasized by the representation of ships on either side of the head of Alexandria. The fourth city goddess is otherwise unknown, that of Treberis (Teveris). She wears a short Amazonian-like dress, a chlamys, helmet and boots. She holds a spear and a shield in her left hand, and at the same time subdues a barbarian prisoner with her

right. Her iconography is clearly derived from that of Rome.

A similar hierarchy is also indicated by the five representations of city personifications on the fragmentary bronze plaques of a cedar-wood casket found in Croatia. According to the inscriptions, the lower frieze depicts the city goddesses Carthage, Constantinopolis, Nicomedia and Siscia paying tribute to Roma, who is seated in the centre. Due to the representations of city goddesses it has been suggested that the casket belonged to a senior Roman officer (Toynbee 1947, 142, pl. VII; Buschhausen 1971, no. A2, pls. 2–6; Bühl 1995, 234–42. Date between 324 and 358). Surely the western Mediterranean region could boast other large cities, such as Carthage, but the *tychae* of this city never came to count among the “big four” of Late Antiquity.

Depictions of city goddesses may, however, also be found associated with the life of an individual at other levels of late antique society. This seems to be confirmed by the representations on the second, more recently found base of Porphyrios in Istanbul.¹² This was put up on the spina of the Hippodrome in Constantinopolis around 500 by the Green faction. All four sides of the upper frieze show Porphyrios standing in a quadriga in triumphal pose. On one side he is crowned by a Nike, but on the remaining three sides he is crowned by three different city goddesses, who seem to spring up out of his own head. These three *tychae* are all clad in long chitons, supporting cornucopiae on their left arm and wearing the traditional mural crowns. Nicomedia and Berytos may be identified by inscriptions on the ledges above the reliefs on the back, whereas the third is perhaps to be identified with Constantinopolis,¹³ the city in which the charioteer Porphyrios won the victory which was the immediate reason for the erection of the statue. All three of these cities were famous for their hippodromes. Presumably Porphyrios had also won victories in the cities of Berytos and Nicomedia prior to the one in Constantinople; this would explain their presence on the statue base. It is noticeable that the representations are very standardized: we would not have been able to identify the three *tychae* if they had not been provided with inscriptions.

The lack of special attributions and the uniform representation of personifications in late antique imagery may also be seen on a silver beaker in the Metropolitan Museum, dated 431–647 (Weitzmann 1979, 178, no. 156; Shelton 1979; Tatton-Brown 1992, no. 1, pl. 77; for discussion of date, Shelton 1979, 28). Four busts of female personifications are depicted, and according to the inscription just below the rim they are to be identified as Roma, Alexandria, Constantinopolis – and Cyprus. It would not have been possible to identify the *tychae* without the inscriptions, since the busts look very

much alike. They are all clad in a long-sleeved garment or mantle, and drapery flutters on either side of their heads. They all wear mural crowns, hold sceptres in their right hands, and two of them (Roma and Constantinopolis) carry orbs in their left, clearly emphasizing their superiority. Although the provenance of the beaker is unfortunately not known, it formed part of a large treasure hoard found in Albania. Until the appearance of the mosaic with the two personifications of Paphos and Cyprus (see above), this was the only known personification of Cyprus.¹⁴ Cyprus's appearance here in combination with Constantinople, Rome and Alexandria leads us to think that Cyprus must have had a special meaning for the patron.

Apart from the city personifications on this beaker, some of the latest depictions of city personifications are preserved in Coptic art and textiles. A wooden tablet found in Tell Edfu depicts a standing female figure (Rutschowskaya 1992, 60–62, no. 40). The tablet is not fully preserved, and the lower part of the painting of the standing city goddess is missing from the knees. The female figure is presumably holding a spear in her raised right hand, and a mural crown is clearly visible in her hair, which is embellished with pearls. She is wearing earrings, and is clad in a long, richly embroidered peplos, with a cloak lying over her left shoulder and arm. A Greek inscription on either side of her head reads “Η ΚΑΛΗ ΑΝΘΡΩΠΗ”: the flourishing beauty. She has been interpreted as Constantinople, and perhaps this is the most obvious interpretation, since the piece is dated to the first half of the 7th century.

Such depictions of city personifications have also been preserved in Coptic textiles (Horak 2001). The depictions are usually rather small and generic; some are depicted in the form of busts within medallions (e.g. Horak 2001, figs. 1–3, 20, 22, 23–24) and are characterized by special headgears or mural crowns, holding cornucopiae and spears. Two are further identified by inscriptions. A square panel preserved in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London (Kendrick 1920, 62, no. 51, pl. XIII; Horak 2001, 44, fig. 18) shows a female bust with a mural crown within a medallion. She holds a cornucopia in her left hand, and a staff or a spear (?) in her right. Above her head is an inscription – ΠΑΝΟΣ – which is usually taken to mean Πανός πόλις or Πανοπολιτών πόλις, the city of Pan (Panopolis). Another Coptic textile in the Louvre (du Bourguet 1964, 465, 662, G. 305; Horak 2001, 44–45, fig. 19) shows a standing female figure holding a cornucopia in her left hand and a torch (?) or a stick in her right. On her head is a crown. The inscription is placed on either side of the figure: ΕΡΜΟΥ ΠΟΛΙΣ (Hermoupolis). Even though many of these city personifications in textiles are unidentified, it has been argued that these textiles were part of an official costume, and that the person

wearing such a costume was thus dignified as a high-ranking magistrate or official, as with the diptychs (Horak 2001, 51–52).

Charidemos and the city personifications

How should we interpret these multiple city personifications? And what does the presence of such personifications in mosaic pavements have to say about the user of such images, i.e. the patron? The representation of city goddesses and *tychae* on coins and on official monuments is immediately intelligible. It appeared above that in particular the personifications of Roma and Constantinopolis were related to the official life that was portrayed on the consular diptychs. Both the Valentianus Calendar of 354 and the *Tabula Peutingeriana* support the argument that such city personifications are related to public and official documents.¹⁵ On the basis of such depictions, a similar interpretation has been attached to the four statuettes from the Esquiline Treasure – and to the Coptic textiles. The question is now, whether the presence of city personifications in mosaics in private contexts indicates that the owner or dedicator of such monuments for instance held some kind of public office.

Although the city personifications in the house of Charidemos in Halikarnassos are represented by busts within medallions, the best parallel seems to be the three city personifications on the mosaic floor in Madaba. In like manner a local city goddess is shown in good company with a well-known personification, Alexandria, and another of the famous *metropoleis* of the late antique world. The size of the medallions may even reflect the order of precedence, since Halikarnassos, placed in the smallest medallion, could hardly compete with Alexandria and Berytos in importance.

The presence of Halikarnassos is obvious, in deference to the city in which the building was situated; but why should Charidemos choose Berytos and Alexandria? Newton (1862, 290) thought that the three city personifications indicated a kind of alliance between the three cities, and suggested that a religious festival may have been the link. Hinks (1933), dating the mosaic floors to the 4th or perhaps 5th century, thought such a religious alliance improbable in the late Roman empire. He assumed that the owner of the “Roman Villa” was somehow associated with the three cities. Our interpretations of the city personifications in the late antique house are likewise attached to the patron of the house, and based on the inscriptions and the motifs of the mosaic floors. According to Signe Isager, the long dedicatory inscription shows many similarities with the epic of the poet Nonnos (Isager 1997, 24–26, 28), and this, combined with the use of the

images of the three city personifications, could indicate that though he was a citizen of Halikarnassos, Charidemos had learned his rhetoric in Alexandria and his law in Berytos. An interpretation related closely to the life of an individual would be consistent with the interpretation of the city personifications on the base of Porphyrios (see above).

I have argued elsewhere that Room E formed the entrance to the house of Charidemos, and that the differing orientations of the city personifications in Room E suggested an itinerary for the visitor to the house (Poulsen 1997). From the vestibule with the three personifications, the visitor would proceed through Room A (an almost square room with hunting animals), then through Room B (with seasons and mythological hunting scenes), and then finally reach the apsidal audience room F (with inscriptions, one announcing the patron of the house, winged female seasons and hunting scenes).

It appears that several “new” *tychae* were created in late antique society, and that they are sometimes placed alongside the well-known great *metropoleis* of the Mediterranean world. It can be observed that the established iconography is not always followed or remembered, and that this is compensated for by the provision of inscriptions. In this respect the development very much parallels that of, for instance, mythological representations in late antique mosaics.¹⁶ New city personifications were either based on existing representations using the basic attributes of the *tychae* – the mural crown or the cornucopia – or they were simply identified by inscriptions.

Furthermore, it appears that the abbreviated form of the city personifications, the bust placed within a medallion, was the preferred form for many city personifications in the majority of the mosaics, many of the textiles, some reliefs, and some of the consular diptychs.¹⁷ The increasingly common appearances of these city personifications in the mosaics should probably be seen as a result both of their extensive use in the official imagery and of general tendencies in late antique society. During this period an increase in many such abstract personifications can be observed in the mosaics of Antioch and other cities in the eastern Mediterranean. They often appear in medallions set within larger compositions such as, for instance, Ktisis (foundation) in the House of Ge and the Seasons and in the House of Ktisis (both from Antioch/Daphne).¹⁸ It is characteristic that the majority of these personifications are female, thus following earlier classical conventions – and that they are usually identified by inscriptions placed near the figures in the mosaic. Furthermore, they were for the most part commissioned for the public areas of houses – reception rooms and dining rooms – or public baths. Ruth Leader-Newby (2005; see also 2004, 123–171) has argued that the numerous representations of abstract personifications in the mosaics of the

houses and public buildings of Late Antiquity were an arena for the display of *paideia*. According to her, such representations of personifications – and of mythology – demonstrated a shared body of knowledge and cultural assumptions that served as an important role in re-identifying the elite after the troubled years of the 3rd century.

As to the representations of the city personifications there are perhaps other possibilities of interpretation as well. In domestic contexts they could perhaps emphasize that the (well-educated) patron reckoned himself as belonging to an international “jet-set” in the late antique society that felt at home in the large *metropoleis* of the Mediterranean world, whether in relation to education or trade. In a more general sense such city personifications could also be expressing wishes for good luck and prosperity, both for the patron and the visitors, but again we then have to explain why certain city personifications were chosen and combined in certain contexts.

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1 The concept of Tyche, Τύχη, was personified already by Hesiod, *Theog.* 360, but although an image was sculpted of Tyche for the inhabitants of Smyrna perhaps as early as in the 6th century (Paus. 4.30.5), she did not become associated with cities (as a city personification) until the Hellenistic period. For Greek personifications, see Shapiro 1993; Stafford and Herrin 2005; Smith 2011. For a survey of the origin of personifications of cities and countries, Shelton 1979, and for city personifications with special reference to Roma and Constantinopolis during Late Antiquity, Toynbee 1947; 1953; Bühl 1995; Grig 2012; Schwarz 1992.

2 Theophylact Simocatta, *Historiae* 8.13.10; McKenzie 2007, 39, 187–88, 244–46. See also Dey and Jacobs in this volume.

3 As to iconography, mural crowns may not unambiguously be used for identifying cities, as for instance shown by the personifications of provinces in the Mosaic of the Provinces from Zeugma (before AD 256), where all the provinces wear mural crowns, Parlasca 1983; Kriseleit 2000, 45–51, figs. 54–57, with references. See also Ostrowski 1990; Shelton 1979, 31. That a certain confusion of attributes for seasons, city goddesses and Tyche/Fortuna exists in this period is, however, clear from the mosaic of the so-called Hippolytos Hall in Madaba (Piccirillo 1993, 51–61 and 66–67, figs. 13–14 and 26–27). In the corners of the acanthus border are representations of richly draped female busts – with a turreted crown. Three of the figures are carrying cornucopiae in their left arm (Autumn, Summer and Winter).

4 However, according to Dunbabin in this volume, note 18, Bowersock's suggestion would not accord well with the chronology of Gregorius and that of the mosaic. According to Woods 2013, Roma and Gregoria should be interpreted as the virtues of “strength” and “vigilance” instead of being representations of cities. I thank D. Woods for the reference to this article of which I could unfortunately not include a discussion.

5 See for instance the illustrations of the cities in the Church of St Stephen in the same city, Piccirillo 1993, 218–31, 238–39; the Church on the Acropolis in Ma'an west of Madaba, Piccirillo 1993, 196–201.

6 Piccirillo 1993, 206–10, especially fig. 332, and 234–35. It may be noticed that

the personification of the Earth, GE, in the same mosaic is dressed, Piccirillo 1993, 235, fig. 368.

7 Depictions of city personifications in other visual media in this part of the Mediterranean world are, of course, plentiful, first and foremost on coinage. Multiple city personifications also occur in imperial historical reliefs, such as for instance the Arch of Trajan in Benevento, the *alimenta* relief, e.g. Hassel 1966, pl. 1; Rotili 1972, pls. LIV, LVI, LXV-LXIX.

8 Delbrueck 1929, no. 2; Olovsson 2005, 20–23; Abbatepaolo 2009, 174–81. Much debated, and at least three different consuls have been suggested, both eastern and western. Flavius Constantinus (west), Flavius Constantinus 414 (east) and Flavius Constantinus first consulship in 414 (west).

9 Victoria and Albert Museum, London: Delbrueck 1929, no. 32; Bühl 1995, 197–217, fig. 104. For similar representations, the diptychon of Clementius, consul of the East in 513, Delbrueck 1929, no. 16; Bühl 1995, 197–217, fig. 103, the diptychon of Magnus, consul of the West in 518, Bühl 1995, 197–217, figs. 105–7. The fine diptych in Vienna would have constituted a third type (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Weitzmann 1979, 173–75, no. 153; Shelton 1979, 33, fig. 6; Bühl 1995, 185–87, fig. 98; Grig 2012, fig. 2.5) but since it has been convincingly argued that this diptych is a Carolingian work (Cutler 1984, reprinted in Cutler 1998, 43–64) it is left out here.

10 Very similar too is the depiction on a relief from Khirbet Tannur, now in the Cincinnati Art Museum, Glueck 1965, 284, 396, 398–448, pls. 46–47; Adams 1970, 62; Weitzmann 1979, 181–82, no. 160. It is made of limestone measuring 29.5 × 35.6 × 13.3 m. It shows a female bust of Atargatis with mural crown placed in a zodiac. The mural crown indicates the deity's role as a protector of the Nabataeans. Originally it included a figure of a winged Nike holding the medallion.

11 The illustrations may also be found in: <http://www.euratlas.net/cartogra/peutinger/>.

12 Cameron 1973, 28–30, 82; Fıratlı 1990, 32–34, no. 64; Bühl 1995, 132–34, fig. 71–72; Bardill 2010, 171–78, figs. 9.24a–d, 9.25–26 – dated to the end of 5th–beginning of 6th century.

13 Nicomedia: Cameron 1973, pls. 1 and 5, Fıratlı 1990, pl. 24.64c; Berytos: Cameron 1973, pl. 3, Fıratlı 1990, pl. 24.64b; Constantinopolis: Cameron 1973, pl. 4, Fıratlı 1990, pl. 24.64d.

14 A third personification of Cyprus seems to have existed in the Sabasteion in Aphrodisias, Ostrowski 1990, 123–24. Other personifications of islands are known such as e.g. Crete, for instance a mosaic in Nea Paphos dated to the 3rd or 4th century. KPHTH is seated on a rock watching the fight between Theseus and the minotaur. She is wearing a mural crown, Ostrowski 1990, 123, pl. XI.2; Daszewski 1985, 15–16, pl. 1.

15 This is also indicated by the presence of city personifications in the *Notitia Dignitatum*, an official register of civil and military offices during the late 4th–early 5th century, Bühl 1995, 254–65.

16 For instance Atalante and Meleager in the House of Charidemus. They are chasing lions rather than the Calydonian boar, Poulsen 1997, 11–13, figs. 4–5.

17 Cf. also the two Coptic reliefs with city personifications placed in wreaths, dated to the 6th–7th century, Horak 2001, 44, figs. 16–17.

18 Ktisis in the House of Ge and the Seasons, Daphne, third quarter of the 5th century (Worcester Art Museum), Balty 1992, no. 3; Kondoleon 2000, 67, fig. 3; Cimok 2000, 281. Ktisis in the House of Ktisis, Campbell 1988, 5–6, pl. 2–3; Balty 1992, no. 5; Cimok 2000, 294–95, first quarter of the 5th century. For further examples of Ktisis, see Balty 1992.

MYTHOLOGY AND THEATRE IN THE MOSAICS OF THE GRAECO-ROMAN EAST

Katherine M. D. Dunbabin

Our knowledge of the decoration of elite houses in the Graeco-Roman East depends very heavily on the mosaics which often constitute their principal surviving remains. Two cities in particular contain a sufficiently representative number of mosaics to allow an overall impression to be formed of their subject matter and its treatment. The mosaic pavements from Antioch offer a series which runs from the 2nd century to the 6th, but clusters especially in the late 2nd and 3rd century;¹ and the excavations at Zeugma on the Euphrates have been notable for the very large number of new mosaics that they revealed, many of the highest quality. They are much more homogeneous chronologically than those at Antioch, all dating before the Sassanian sack of Zeugma in 253, and probably belong for the most part to the late 2nd and early 3rd century.² Both cities, therefore, provide a fair sample of the range of decorative themes selected to adorn the wealthier houses, and offer a good basis for assessing the visual culture and interests of their owners.

In both cities, as in this region generally, the mythological repertory provides a high proportion of the subject-matter of the mosaics. The role of mythology can of course be seen as a reflection of the claim to Hellenic culture, to *paideia*, as important here in Syria as anywhere in the Greek-speaking world.³ Some of the subject matter is familiar throughout the Graeco-Roman world, in a wide variety of media and with more or less standard iconography: common subjects such as Perseus and Andromeda, Achilles on Skyros, and innumerable Dionysiac scenes. But there are also a number of scenes which are much rarer, and occasionally some that are very obscure and can hardly have formed a familiar part of the visual environment. There

has long been discussion of the sources of these mythological scenes and of their relationship to the works of classical Greek literature in which the story was treated, especially to classical drama; some recent scholars have turned their attention to the role of contemporary theatrical performance in this relationship (see Huskinson 2002–3; Stefanou 2006, with my review in Dunbabin 2007). Antioch was famous as a centre of theatrical life, and much of our best evidence for the leading genre of the later Roman stage, pantomime, comes from that city, notably in the works of Lucian in the 2nd century, Libanius and John Chrysostom in the 4th century (Haubold and Miles 2004; Webb 2008; Molloy 1996; Leyerle 2001, 13–41). The question, therefore, is whether there is a connection between the scenes chosen for representation on the mosaics and the performances of the contemporary stage, and what form such a connection might take. And what in turn might be the connection between both these phenomena and the canonical treatment of these subjects in the classical dramatists?

The traditional approach to the question was that of K. Weitzmann in his discussion of the mosaic known as the Red Pavement from the house of the same name at Daphne in Antioch, probably of the second half of the 2nd century. The pavement is divided into five main figured panels, as well as smaller panels at the corners with the Seasons, all but the central panel with a red ground (Fig. 12.1). One of the larger panels clearly shows Phaedra and Hippolytos, another Meleager and Atalanta; the other three are less easily identified (Weitzmann 1941, 233–42; for the panel with Meleager and Atalanta, see Raeck 1992, 71–72). Weitzmann assumed that all five must be seen as illustrations of Euripidean tragedies, and identified the three uncertain panels as showing the meeting of Bellerophon and Stheneboia from Euripides' lost play *Stheneboia*; the scene from the *Troades* where Aphrodite offers Helen to Paris (not in fact performed on stage in that play, but recounted in Helen's speech ll. 929–37); and in the central panel Medea with Jason and one of the two children. He believed further that they were chosen by the patron on the basis of his reading and as a demonstration of his literary tastes, and claimed that where the original survives, "the relationship between text and picture ... turns out to be as close as possible" (Weitzmann 1941, 241). Weitzmann also cited the mosaic from the House of Iphigeneia at Antioch, which he took as a direct illustration of the scene from Euripides' *Iphigeneia in Aulis*, where the young Iphigeneia is brought by Clytemnestra to Agamemnon (Fig. 12.2). Here he saw allusions to the theatre in Agamemnon's costume, characteristic of the king in tragedy, and in the background, which he took as reflecting the columns and doors of the Roman *scaenae frons*.⁴



Fig. 12.1. Antioch (Daphne), mosaic of the Red Pavement. Photo Department of Art and Archaeology, Princeton University, courtesy S. T. Kenfield.



Fig. 12.2. Antioch, House of Iphigeneia, mosaic of Iphigeneia in Aulis. Photo Department of Art and Archaeology, Princeton University, courtesy S. T. Kenfield.

The specific identifications that Weitzmann proposed for the doubtful panels in the Red Pavement were disputed almost at once by D. Levi, and even where the identification of the theme is certain his assumption that the scene is a direct illustration of the text does not work; the scenes sometimes openly contradict the texts and follow their own iconographic tradition well established in art.⁵ Moreover the characters are not shown as actors in performance; there are no masks or *kothournoi*, and except for Agamemnon in the Iphigeneia mosaic, all wear standard heroic dress, not anything resembling theatrical costume. What is represented is the myth itself, the story, not a scene

from a play. But however unfounded the idea that these or similar scenes in Graeco-Roman art can be taken as literal illustrations of a literary text, this does not mean that the question of their relationship with classical literature (in the case of scenes like these principally with Euripides) has no value. The canonical works of Greek literature formed the foundation of all later Greek education; those with any pretensions to culture had been exposed to them intensively throughout their school days. A scene of (for instance) Phaedra and Hippolytos might not be an exact illustration of a specific scene in Euripides' play, still less a rendering of it as performed by tragic actors on stage; but its choice as domestic decoration might still act primarily as an assertion of literary culture, the product of the patrons' education and reading. But other forms of diffusion of mythological stories also existed, beside the literary text and the traditional tragic stage; their role also needs to be considered.

At Zeugma as at Antioch the themes of many of the mosaics go back to Greek tragedy, and especially to Euripides. In one of the grandest houses there, the House of Poseidon, the big triclinium pavement contains two figured panels, a smaller one with the Triumph of Dionysos facing the interior of the room where the guests would recline, and a very fine larger one set for the guests to see as they entered, which shows Daedalus and Pasiphae (Plate 26) (Abadie-Reynal 2002, 751–52; Darmon 2005, 1293–95; Önal 2009, 16–26; J.-P. Darmon in Abadie-Reynal, Ergeç 2012, 239–73). This is a rare subject in Roman art, otherwise unknown in the Eastern Empire; it is told here in a detailed form that corresponds closely to what we know of Euripides' lost play *Cretans*, but has no parallels in the West (see *LIMC* VII (1994), 193–200 s.v. Pasiphae (J. Papadopoulos) on the literary sources). A courtyard in the same house contains the scene of Achilles' discovery on Skyros, a story given its definitive form in Euripides' *Skyrioi*, though it is a much more widespread subject in Roman art;⁶ an adjacent room has Perseus and Andromeda, again a well established subject derived, ultimately, from Euripides (Abadie-Reynal 2002, 760–61; Darmon 2005, 1286–88; Önal 2009, 44–46; *LIMC* I (1981), 774–90 s.v. Andromeda (K. Schauenburg), esp. 775, 787–88, on Euripides' *Andromeda*). Another house has a mosaic showing Danae with the infant Perseus arriving at Seriphos, again a rare subject in Roman art and treated in (probably) a lost play of Euripides, as well as in other dramatical works of the classical period (Önal 2009, 120–21, discovered in 2003. Danae: *LIMC* III (1986), 325–37 s.v. Danae (J.-J. Maffre).

Once again none of these mosaics at Zeugma gives a direct illustration of the scene as it would be presented by masked actors on stage. At the most there may be indirect allusions to the theatre, as in

the Iphigeneia mosaic at Antioch: in the Achilles mosaic at Zeugma the costume of King Lykomedes is again the characteristic costume of the king in tragedy, while the columned background may perhaps recall the *scaenae frons*.⁷ Scenes of theatrical performance with masked and costumed actors are by no means uncommon at this date, but almost all show comedy, specifically the plays of Menander. From Zeugma comes a mosaic showing his *Synaristosai*, identified by inscription (Abadie-Reynal, Darmon 2003); while a series of mosaic panels illustrating four of Menander's plays, *Perikeiromene*, *Philadelphoi*, *Synaristosai*, *Theophoroumene*, all again identified by name, has recently been found near Antioch (Gutzwiller and Çelik 2012). Corresponding scenes of tragedy in performance are very much rarer and almost entirely confined to pendants for scenes of comedy, like the paintings from the "Theaterzimmer" in one of the dwellings in Hanghaus 2 (WE1 SR6) in Ephesos, with alternating scenes of comedy and tragedy, all labelled with the title of the play (Zimmermann and Ladstätter 2010, 114–17; second quarter of 3rd century). The relationship between scenes like these and actual public performance of traditional drama has been much discussed, as indeed has the extent to which traditional drama, especially tragedy, continued to be performed in the East by the 3rd century, and if so in what form. But the distinction just noted between comedy and tragedy, and the rarity of explicit representations of performance of tragedy, have a much longer history; a preference for illustrating the myth itself rather than the performance does not rule out the possibility of some influence from the stage upon the visual record.⁸

However the dominant serious theatrical genre of the 2nd and 3rd centuries was not traditional drama but pantomime, which was essentially a mythological ballet presented by star solo dancers who took each of the leading parts, male or female, in turn.⁹ Pantomime took many of its themes from tragedy, and was often referred to in Greek as tragic dance (*tragikē orkhēsis* or *kinēsis*); and it is noteworthy how many of the mythological scenes on the mosaics at Zeugma or Antioch correspond to themes known to have been favourites in pantomime. Achilles on Skyros is mentioned by both Lucian and Libanius, and later by Chorikios, as a characteristic pantomime theme; the story of Achilles dressed as a girl and then revealed as a man fits everything that we know of the dancers' play with sexual ambivalence and sudden transformations of gender. Pasiphae too is mentioned by Lucian, and both she and Phaedra exemplify the theme of women's illicit passions which the Church Fathers condemned so often in the theatre.¹⁰ If we look for an intermediary between the texts and the scenes on the mosaics, the popular and influential pantomime would be a likely candidate. One characteristic of the pantomime's

performance was the presentation of memorable tableaux, when the dancer would suddenly freeze, holding his pose (on these *schemata*, see Garelli 2007, 225–26, 336–37; Webb 2008, 70–71). In the same way most of the mosaics concentrate on the single most dramatic episode, like the moment at which Achilles suddenly leaps up, letting his women’s clothing slip aside, and grasps the weapons; and they do so in a tableau-like form. Others, like the Pasiphae mosaic, show a succession of episodes, which would have suited the dancer who told the story by presenting each character in turn: Pasiphae consumed by a frenzy of love and sunk in grief, the old nurse on her errand, full of doubts, then Daedalus reacting in bemusement to her request before turning to the task with his son. Despite all this, however, the mosaics in no way illustrate the actual performance of a pantomime on stage, with a single masked dancer; it is again the story itself that it is shown.

Explicit reference to pantomime appears, however, on another mosaic from Zeugma (Önal 2008; 2009, 86–90; detailed publication in Gökay *et al.* 2008). This too comes from a large and impressively decorated triclinium; the larger panel facing the entrance has another scene of Achilles on Skyros, the inner panel, between the area for the couches, the much rarer story of the two sisters Theonoe and Leukippe, preserved by the Roman mythographer Hyginus (*fab.* 190 Marshall) (Fig. 12.3).¹¹ The mosaic shows the meeting between Theonoe and her sister Leukippe at a sacrifice; Leukippe is disguised as a priest of Apollo, and Theonoe, unaware of the priest’s true identity, falls in love with him/her. W. Slater and M. Cropp have recently argued that this little known story is very likely to go back to a drama by one of the followers of Euripides; there are also echoes or parallels in the world of the Graeco-Roman novel, and in later mime (Slater and Cropp 2009, 70–71; earlier Gökay *et al.* 2008, 25–26). On the mosaic, however, there are insistent allusions to pantomime in the figure of Theonoe herself. Her costume includes a stole which can be identified as the characteristic *pallium* worn by the pantomime dancer, while her face is shown as a mask with closed mouth, as were those worn by the dancers; it finds specific parallels among masks worn by figures who explicitly represent pantomimes (for all these parallels, and discussion of the costume and masks of pantomimes, see Dunbabin 2010).

The guests reclining in the triclinium, as they looked at the Theonoe scene, were therefore directed by Theonoe’s mask and costume to think of pantomime, in a way otherwise unprecedented to our knowledge; the reason was presumably the rarity of the story, otherwise unfamiliar. But as usual the mosaic in no way illustrates an actual performance by the solo dancer; the rest of the scene tells the

story, in the habitual manner. The reference to pantomime would also assist the guests to make out the connection underlying the pavement as a whole, and the scene of Achilles on Skyros at the entrance to the room: Achilles dressed in women's clothing and ultimately revealed as a man is contrasted with Leukippe of the shorn hair, the woman dressed as a man and revealed at the end of the play as a woman. Both stories would have given a dancer excellent opportunity to display his skills in presenting both genders and in shifting from one to the other.



Fig. 12.3. Zeugma, mosaic of Theonoe. Photo courtesy of Zeugma Archaeological Project Image Archive 2007© and K. Görkay.

The relationship between the mosaics at Antioch or Zeugma and the original Greek texts, and the role of theatre in this relationship, may then be summarised as follows. That many of the subjects descended ultimately from classic Greek tragedies, usually those of Euripides,

cannot be doubted; however there is little to show how strongly these texts figured in the patrons' choice of the subject, and whether the tastes that they set on display were meant to be seen primarily as literary (see Dunbabin 2007). It may be noted that many of the plays in question were not among those that belonged to the standard school curriculum; a well educated man would have known them (or at least known of them), but it is doubtful that many people even from the wealthier classes in Zeugma would have been familiar from reading with a play by a follower of Euripides on the Shorn Leukippe. Pantomime on the other hand drew its themes very substantially from tragic material and undoubtedly acted in this period as one of the main means of diffusion for familiarity with these stories.¹² Libanius summed it up when he described the role of pantomime in the education of the masses: "a goldsmith can keep up a conversation with a product of the schools about the house of Priam or that of Laius" (Or. 64.112). The audiences would have been exposed, repeatedly, to a wide range of mythological stories on stage, presented in a manner designed to make the maximum appeal to their eyes and ears; this surely did more to keep them alive among those whose memories of school reading were at best sketchy. Rather than trying to distinguish specific sources for the mosaics, we should conclude that art and theatre were closely interwoven; together they worked not just to reflect but to create a culture whose language was mythology. The stories that viewers saw set out on the floor – and of course in paintings and tapestries and many other aspects of domestic decoration now lost – were the same that they saw and heard on stage; they made up the body of references that the educated were supposed to recognize and to use to demonstrate their claim to Hellenic culture. It was not a matter simply of knowing the stories; a whole system of thought, speech, and reference depended upon it. Those who saw the story of Pasiphae or Phaedra as they entered a great man's dining room were being invited to display their own *paideia* by discussing the story or commenting on its implications. If in the process they could produce a tag from Euripides, so much the better; but as Alan Cameron has shown, such tags were as likely to come from mythographic handbooks as from the original texts, and there must have been many who were more likely to remember a recent presentation in the theatre (see Cameron 2004, 58–59, 67, 237–49).

The mosaics of Zeugma, whose production ceased abruptly in 253, and the 2nd to 3rd century mosaics of Antioch reflect a worldview that goes back in many ways to the Hellenistic period, when classical Hellenic culture is the standard to which all members of the elite in the Greek-speaking world aspired, and by which they were judged.

But for how long thereafter did such a view continue to be the norm? And how did it survive in the face of Christian attacks and challenges? Mythological subjects continue to be used on mosaics in secular contexts in the 5th century and as late as the first half of the 6th, though they are less common (and less varied) than two or three hundred years earlier.¹³ Such subjects have often been read as evidence for the survival of paganism at this date, and the patrons who commissioned them identified as determined upholders of the old religion or followers of neo-Platonism.¹⁴ That paganism did survive well into the 6th century, and in some places much later, is undoubtedly true (Bowersock 1990, 35–40; Chuvin 1990, esp. 101–18, 131–48; Cameron 2011, esp. 783–801); but the presence of a mythological subject in secular art should not by itself be taken as a sign that the patrons must necessarily have been pagan. Mythology remained the expression of traditional Hellenic culture for the educated classes, both pagan and Christian; and there is plenty of evidence that for large (though perhaps diminishing) numbers of Christians in the 5th and early 6th centuries mythological subjects in art belonged to a familiar and unproblematic realm.¹⁵ The mythological mosaics very seldom make any statement about the religious affiliations of their owners and viewers, which may have ranged over the whole spectrum from committed pagans to tolerant and cultured Christians. What they do demonstrate is that their owners continued to assert their character as educated Greeks.

One of the most striking mythological mosaics from the early Byzantine period is the impressive pavement that decorated the so-called Hall of Hippolytos in Madaba in Jordan; it can be placed with strong probability in the first half of the 6th century, before the construction of the later church of the Virgin above it (Fig. 12.4).¹⁶ It has two figured panels surrounded by a scroll border which encloses figures of hunters with their prey and busts of the Seasons. The upper of the two panels shows Aphrodite and Adonis seated together, in the middle of a lively scene of the three Charites and six Erotes, all identified by inscriptions; one Eros is held up by a Charis to be beaten by Aphrodite with a sandal, another climbs a tree while a second Charis grasps his ankle, a third Eros overturns a basket of roses. A peasant girl (*agroikis*) brings a basket of fruit and a bird as offerings. Below, in a damaged panel, is the story of Phaedra and Hippolytos; Phaedra stands beside a couple of maidservants (labelled *therapenai*), Hippolytos is lost in the lacuna, but his name is preserved, along with the tip of his spear. A boy beside him (labelled *doulos*) holds the reins of his horse (or the leash of a hound), while much more unusual is the figure of an elderly bearded and balding man holding a falcon, accompanied by the general heading *propoloi* (attendants). Next to

him, the old nurse (*gere*, for *geraia*) is almost entirely destroyed, but was evidently shown falling or crouching on the ground. Outside the frame are three enthroned city-personifications, labelled Roma, Gregoria, and Madaba itself, in addition to other minor motifs.¹⁷ In the heart of the very Christian city of 6th century Madaba, we should not look for any suggestion of pagan religious content in this mosaic. The atmosphere in the panel with Aphrodite and Adonis is festive and light-hearted, a celebration of the power of love which enthralled even the goddess herself. The roses scattered around and held in Aphrodite's hand suggest an allusion to a spring Festival of Roses, such as we know to have been celebrated in the city of Gaza and to have been particularly associated with Aphrodite and Adonis; whatever the original content of such a festival, in the 6th century it was clearly acceptable to a largely Christian population.¹⁸ There is no open allusion to the tragic outcome of the story, though an educated viewer might make the connection between Adonis as hunter and Hippolytos in the scene below, while the power of Aphrodite and of Eros provides the main link to the story of Phaedra and Hippolytos. The whole constitutes a very clear attestation to the continuing attraction of traditional classical culture, and to the existence in Madaba of an educated class who wished to display that culture.

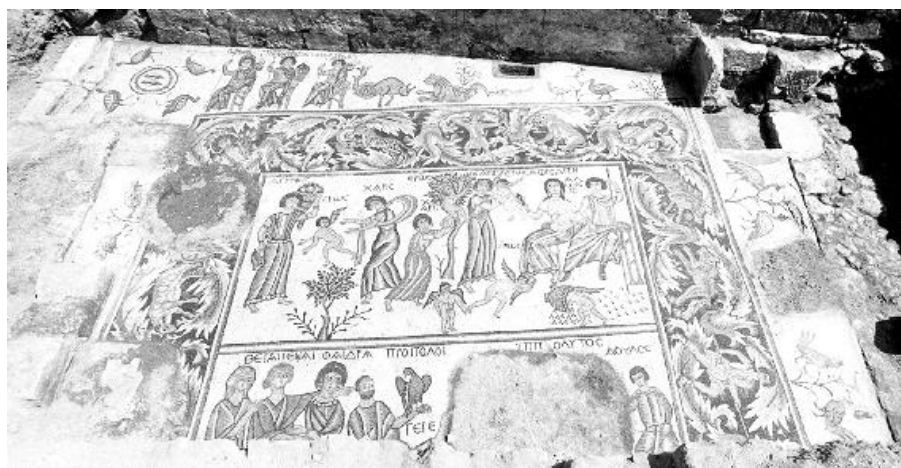


Fig. 12.4. Madaba, Hall of Hippolytos, mosaic of Aphrodite and Adonis and Phaedra and Hippolytos. Photo courtesy Studium Biblicum Franciscanum, Jerusalem.

Other inhabitants of 5th- to 6th-century Madaba also had a taste for decorating their houses with scenes from mythology. Several other mosaics with mythological subjects have been found in Madaba, all fragmentary, and unfortunately lacking context or dating evidence, but presumably of much the same date as that in the Hall of Hippolytos. One shows a dancing bacchante and satyr, and when

found also included Ariadne, another the young Heracles, identified by the first three letters of his name, strangling a lion (Piccirillo 1989, 134–39; 1993, 76, 80, pl. 33; 2007, on private houses at Madaba generally; Bowersock 2006, 44–46;). On the third are the remarkable frontal figures of Achilles playing his lyre, with Patroklos, and a female crowned by Eros (Figs. 12.5a–b) (Piccirillo 1989, 136–37; 1993, 76–77, pl. 32, suggesting a date for all three in the first half of the 6th century; Bowersock 2006, 48–50). She can only be meant for Briseis, whose role as Achilles’ lover is frequently stressed in Late Antiquity, though her name is garbled, as are several of the other inscriptions on the mosaic; it may be assumed that the mosaicist’s knowledge of Greek was limited.¹⁹ There is no reference to any one specific episode in the Iliad; Achilles appears as musician, lover, and friend, and reference to his warlike exploits is absent (for Achilles and Briseis in late antique art, see Ghedini 1997, 256–58, 260; Stefanou 2006, 57–87; Simon 1967). The remains of Dionysiac figures including Pan are just visible in the (damaged) upper part of the panel, and must have produced an atmosphere of revelry. Both Achilles and Patroklos are nude, with conspicuous genitalia, as is the satyr on the Dionysiac panel, and indeed the two Eros (and, though less aggressively, Heracles). Nudity is often avoided in late antique art; heroes who would earlier have been shown as heroically nude are now often represented wearing contemporary costume, like Hippolytos at Madaba, or Meleager in the scenes discussed below. This is in part due to the desire to present the figures as examples with whom contemporary viewers can identify and regard as models (a trend I discuss below), in part also to a changed attitude to the body which produced a heightened sense of physical modesty, not confined to Christians (for instance Brown 1988, 315–21 (on Chrysostom’s attitude to the body), 437–38; Bowersock *et al.* 1999, 615–16 s.v. nudity (M. Reid). On nudity in late antique art see Raeck 1992, 146). Where nudity is shown, its use can be attributed to a stress on the traditional nature of the theme, a desire to cling, however, distantly, to classical prototypes; but the exaggerated nature of the execution on these Madaba mosaics shows how unfamiliar it had become.²⁰



Fig. 12.5a. Madaba, mosaic of Achilles, drawing, after Piccirillo 1986, fig. 18.



Fig. 12.5b. Madaba, mosaic of Achilles, photo (before restoration), after Piccirillo 1989, fig. p.136, courtesy Studium Biblicum Franciscanum, Jerusalem.

Phaedra and Hippolytos appear also on a mosaic from what appears to be a large villa at Sheikh Zuweid in the Sinai; the date is uncertain but is unlikely to be earlier than the mid-5th century (Figs. 12.6a–b).²¹ All the characters are named, and the action is more straightforward than at Madaba; Phaedra sits alone in a columned building, the nurse hands the letter to Hippolytos, and two huntsmen (*kynagoi*) wait at the side with a horse. A larger accompanying panel shows Dionysos in a chariot drawn by centaurs with his *thiasos*, including the drunken Heracles, arranged over two registers. Again the main characters are named, and another label, *Telete* (initiation, ritual), seems to refer to the whole scene, not to identify an individual figure. Above, between, and below the figured panels are three inscriptions, two of them in verse. These combine several themes: the lowest one greets the visitor, with an invitation to admire the beauty of the mosaic, which is praised as the work of Kypris and the Graces; the middle one again invites the viewer to enjoy the charm of the mosaic, and abjures the destructive power of Envy (*Phthonos*) and the Evil Eye (*ommata baskaniēs*); while the short upper one praises the founder, Nestor (for the texts of the inscriptions see Bernand 1969, 483–88; on their use here, see Böhm 2003, 66–68). M. Olszewski comments on this mosaic that it shows the occupants of the property to have been hellenised and profoundly pagan; but while they were undoubtedly proud of their Hellenic culture, there is in my view no basis for a conclusion about their religion one way or the other (Olszewski 2001, 286). I

have discussed the significance of the Dionysos panel elsewhere and concluded that its theme is general Dionysiac revelry, without specific cultic elements (Dunbabin 2008, 209–10). The themes of the inscriptions similarly all belong among the commonplaces of late antique/early Byzantine encomiastic epigraphy, in no way confined to the committed pagan; the defiance of Phthonos is found in both pagan and Christian sources, and Kypris and the Graces are standard ornamental flourishes embellishing a claim of beauty.²² Their mention here is comparable to the scene of Aphrodite and Adonis on the Madaba mosaic: they imply an atmosphere of beauty, elegant luxury, a mild eroticism.



Fig. 12.6a. Sheikh Zuweid, mosaic of Phaedra and Hippolytos and Dionysiac scene, drawing of whole, after Clédat 1915, fig. 5.



Fig. 12.6b. Sheikh Zuweid, panel of Phaedra and Hippolytos, photo after Clédât 1915, pl. III.

The scenes of Phaedra and Hippolytos at Madaba and Sheikh Zuweid are both concerned to tell the story in a narrative form, like their predecessor at Antioch. But there is a tendency to modernise the scene, especially marked at Madaba through the costumes, jewellery, and hairstyles of Phaedra and her attendants, which belong to the early Byzantine world, not to traditional iconography. More remarkable is the figure of the falconer, an art unknown in the ancient world before the late 4th or 5th century (for representations of falconry in ancient art, see Åkerström-Hougen 1974, 86–94, on the hunting scenes in the Villa of the Falconer at Argos, dated around 500). His presence on the Madaba mosaic was not an invention of the mosaicist; he also appeared in the painting of Phaedra and Hippolytos described in an *ekphrasis* of Prokopios of Gaza and must belong to the mosaicist's model, whatever it was, but he is an obvious intrusion into the original story.²³ Like the contemporary clothing, he serves to modernize the scene, bringing it closer to the viewers' own world. Linked with this is the desire found on some of these mosaics, such as the Hippolytos scene at Madaba, to enhance the dignity of the protagonists by multiplying the number of servants who surround them, and who are often emphasised by the inscriptions naming *therapainai* or *douloi* and so on.

On other mythological mosaics of this period the link with the original story and the traditional iconography is much looser. Meleager and Atalanta, for instance, appear together in the House of

Charidemos at Halikarnassos, identified by name (Fig. 12.7 and Plate 27); but whereas the traditional motif showed the hunters facing the boar on foot, Meleager nude and Atalanta in short Amazon-like tunic, one shoulder often bare, here they are on horseback and wear contemporary costume, and Meleager's spear is directed against a leopard, not a boar.²⁴ The pair was combined with a scene of the hunt of Aeneas and Dido, another pair of mythical hunter-lovers, now lost, and known only from the account of C. T. Newton in 1862 (Hinks 1933, 127; Poulsen 1995, 204–5; Stefanou 2006, 19–25). Further mythological figures appeared on other mosaics in the same house: Europa and the bull, marine Aphrodite in her shell, and Dionysos and his followers, as well as the busts of three city-personifications (Hinks 1933, 125–26, 131–43, nos. 52–56; Poulsen 1995, 204; 1997; Poulsen in this volume). The house also contained a verse inscription praising the patron, Charidemos, and stressing the beauty and skill of the mosaic in a manner comparable to the inscriptions at Sheikh Zuweid; however mythological allusions are absent here (for this inscription, and others in the house, see Isager 1995; 1997).



Fig. 12.7 Halikarnassos, House of Charidemos, mosaic of Meleager and Atalanta, drawing after photographs made by B. Spackman 1856 (by I. Bjerg Poulsen, courtesy B. Poulsen).

Several of the themes found on the Halikarnassos mosaics appear on other mosaics of the period, both in Asia Minor and in the Near Eastern region. On a mosaic from Apamea on the Orontes two unnamed riders are shown fighting a variety of wild beasts (two leopards, lioness, and bear); they are recognizable as Meleager and Atalanta only by their gender, and from the fact that, while Meleager wields his spear, Atalanta takes aim with an arrow, her traditional weapon (Fig. 12.8) (Dulière 1969, 125–30, pl. 52.1; Balty 1977, 118–22, nos. 54–56, with a date in the last quarter of the 5th century; Raeck 1992, 83, fig. 59; 1997, 34, fig. 4). Both wear curious headcoverings that seem to be taken from the costume of Persia or adjacent regions of the Near East (see Balty 1977, 120). The

remarkable mosaic from a peristyle-building at Sarrîn in Orshoène, datable around 500, includes a pair of seated hunter-lovers who (in the absence of labels) could be either Meleager and Atalanta or Aeneas and Dido, together with scenes of Europa and the bull, marine Aphrodite, and Heracles and Auge, as well as longer panels containing Artemis with beasts and hunters, and Dionysos, Ariadne, and the *thiasos* (Balty 1990; see above n. 14). Several unnamed mythical hunters appear on the mosaics of the Nile Festival Building at Sepphoris in Galilee, including a couple on horseback fighting felines; they could be Meleager and Atalanta or Aeneas and Dido, or an Amazon with her companion.²⁵ Finally, Meleager and Atalanta appear in more familiar form on a mosaic from Xanthos, both on foot and identified by name, Meleager fighting with a spear, Atalanta with bow and arrow, and only the head of the boar visible; Meleager wears a sleeved tunic typical of Late Antiquity.²⁶



Fig. 12.8. Apamea, mosaic of Meleager and Atalanta. Photo courtesy J. Balty.

W. Raeck has discussed these scenes of Meleager and Atalanta as examples of the process of transformation of mythological themes in the art of Late Antiquity, whereby the link was steadily loosened with the underlying story, the essential content implicit in earlier versions of the scene such as that in the House of the Red Pavement at Antioch: the fact that Meleager and Atalanta were engaged in fighting a boar (Raeck 1992, 71–98; 1997; see also *LIMC* II (1984), 49–50 s.v. *Atalante* (J. Boardman and G. Arrigoni)). Instead, the protagonists are

used as exemplary models of desirable qualities, in this instance of heroic courage as hunters, of mutual love and support, and of aristocratic prowess and status, demonstrated by the possession of horses, hounds, and by elegant and fashionable clothing. Thereby they act as prototypes of the owners and their peers, exemplars of the virtues with which they wish to be credited.²⁷ In extreme cases this can lead to the loss of all narrative content: for instance, the linen and wool wall-hanging presumed to be of Egyptian origin in the collection of the Abegg-Stiftung at Riggisberg in Switzerland, where Meleager and Atalanta appear splendidly dressed and standing motionless within an ornamental arcade (Fig. 12.9).²⁸ Atalanta's name is written above her, but otherwise they are identified only by their attributes, spear and hunting knife for Meleager, arrow and quiver for Atalanta; the context as a whole has been abandoned, and they are presented simply as impressive figures for the viewer's admiration. The majority of the mosaics discussed here do not go as far as this in discarding the traditional action, but the Achilles mosaic at Madaba discussed above does appear to have similarly abandoned the narrative almost entirely: the main aim of the mosaicist here is to present his characters as formally as possible to the viewers, and to draw attention to the beauty of the woman through the motif of the Erotes holding a crown above her head.

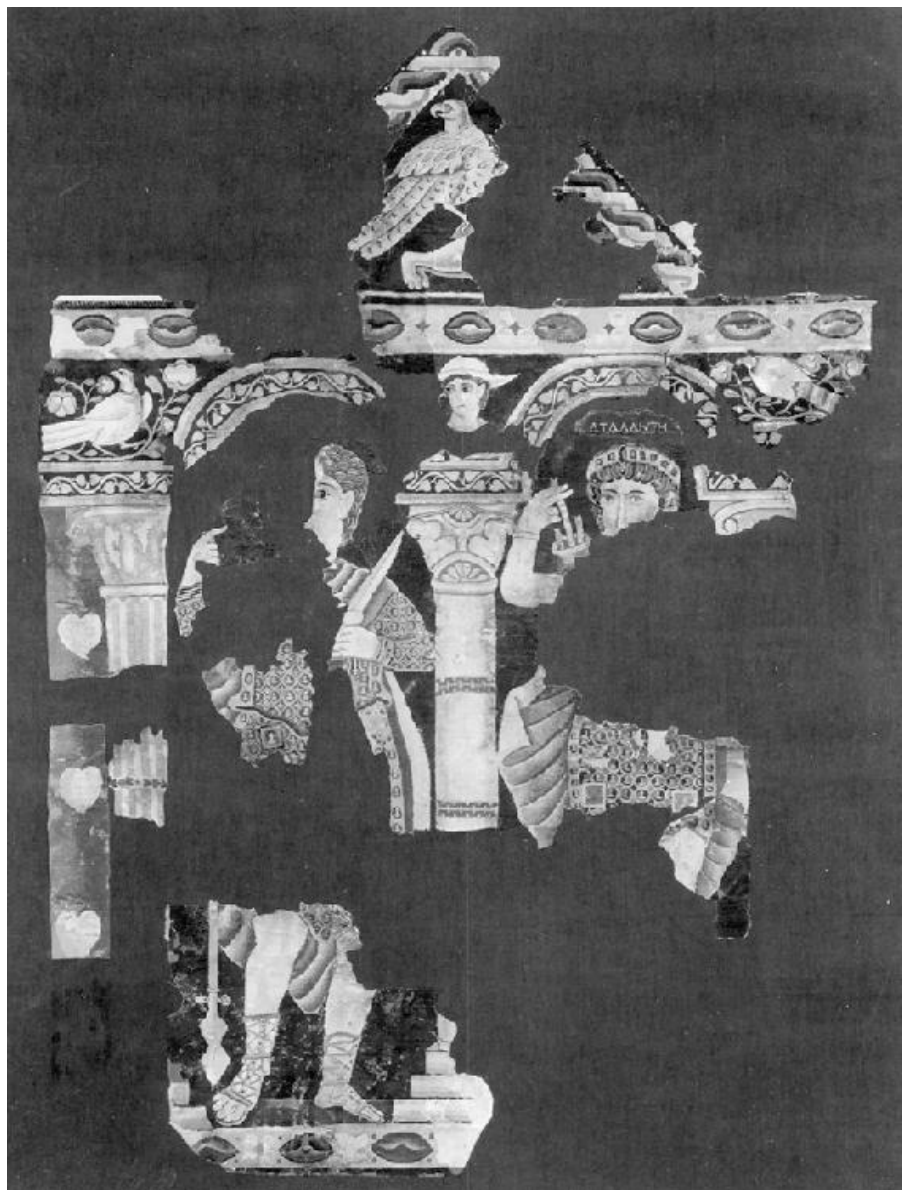


Fig. 12.9. Wall-hanging with Meleager and Atalanta. Abegg-Stiftung CH-3132 Riggisberg, 2003 (Photo: Christoph von Viräg).

On the works just discussed the link with any original textual source of the story has grown very thin. Most cannot be closely identified as any specific episode in a text, but give instead a generalized representation of the protagonists; their aims and emphasis are different from those of the more traditional versions, and essential ingredients (like the boar in the Meleager scenes) are omitted or altered. They still, of course, have a common purpose to set on display

the Hellenic culture of their owners and to provide an opportunity for its exhibition by their viewers; and that culture was still undoubtedly nourished by childhood exposure to the traditional literary texts (Brown 1992, 121–26; Bowersock *et al.* 1999, 421–23 s.v. education (R. Kaster); also Baratte 2001). But those texts cannot be seen as having directly inspired the scenes from mythology that were chosen for the decoration of these houses: an increasingly narrow range of themes, only a few of which depend on the canonical works of Greek classical literature that formed the basis of education. The sources of their vitality must be sought elsewhere.

The role of the theatre undoubtedly needs to be counted among those sources. Theatre continued to be a powerful force in Antioch in the 4th century, as is clear not only from Libanius but even more from the vehement ranting of Chrysostom against it (Webb 2008, esp. 7–11, 197–216; Theocharidis 1940; Leyerle 2001, 13–41. For Libanius *Or.* 64, see Molloy 1996). The importance and popularity of pantomime are attested well into the 6th century in Constantinople and many cities throughout the East by the accounts of riots caused by the fans of leading dancers, as well as by epigrams that celebrate the dancers' skills (Riots: Cameron 1976, 224–29. Epigrams: Weinreich 1948, 77–82, 97–111, the last group all for female pantomimes). In the early 6th century Choricus of Gaza speaks of dancers performing mythological subjects such as Achilles or Hippolytos, Briseis or Phaedra, and shifting from one gender role to the other;²⁹ while the denunciations contained in the Syriac Homilies against the Theatre delivered by Jacob of Serugh around 500 demonstrate the continued attraction of mythological performance when he speaks of the shocking tales of Apollo or Heracles or the adulteries of the goddesses, acted out by the masked silent dancer (see the translation of Jacob's *Homilies on the Spectacles of the Theatre* in Hall, Wyles 2008, 412–19, esp. Homilies 3–5; Bowersock 1990, 37–38, on Jacob's account of pantomimes in 6th-century Syrian theatres). Jacob, like Chrysostom before him, was speaking of course to a Christian audience whose members, or some of them, persisted in attending the theatre and enjoying the spectacles. And the accounts of the Festival of Roses at Gaza, with their allusions to Aphrodite and Adonis, suggest the sort of occasion at which mythological performance might be presented, either in the form of formal pantomime or perhaps of a more informal mythological spectacle (see above n. 18). Despite the ardent disapproval of many ecclesiastics, then, myth mediated through the theatre continued to provide a familiar framework for a large proportion of the elite in the east, Christian as well as pagan.³⁰

A number of scholars have been struck by the “theatrical” aspect of the scenes on late mythological mosaics (and in other media) from

this region, and have associated them with the world of the theatre.³¹ The discussion earlier in this paper would suggest that such an association should not be seen as something that is new or stronger in the 5th-6th century, but rather as the continuation of a tendency already apparent at least three centuries earlier. Nevertheless, the later works differ from their predecessors in ways that indicate a substantial transformation in their relationship both to their viewers and to their various sources. One such change is the direct address to the spectator seen on many of them, which may indeed be related to the manner whereby the characters were presented through the medium of dance and its use of visual tableaux. Choricus' account of the dancer's performance describes his presentation of "the Thessalian [Achilles] or the Amazon's boy [Hippolytos]', of Briseis or Phaedra, as persuading the theatre "not that he is miming, but that what he mimes really took place" (*Or.* 21 (= dial.12), I, 248 Foerster-Richtsteig); this implies a similar direct communication between the characters and the viewers. This communication belongs to a wider tendency in late antique art, in no way confined to mythological scenes; it reflects a general change in the way of "seeing" art which may indeed be affected by the practices of the stage (Böhm 2003, 59–66).

Equally striking, however, is the loss of interest in the clarity of the narrative, and the transformation of the actors into examples of moral qualities.³² This suggests a weakening of direct influence from any form of theatrical performance in which dramatic narrative was still paramount. It may be, in fact, that pantomime itself had undergone a similar process, with emphasis shifting from the dancer's skills in telling a story to those of delineation of character; but that possibility cannot be examined further here. At this time too, as 300 years earlier, we should see the uses and treatment of mythology in the figurative arts and in the theatre as inseparably interrelated, rather than trying to prove that one directly influenced the other.

What the mosaics undoubtedly do show is the persistence of a cultural system in which mythology constituted the essential language; viewers were expected to comprehend the references that the scenes implied, Achilles is still *the* example of heroism and, with Briseis, of love, Meleager of valour and prowess. These references are not always the same as they might have been three centuries earlier, but the changes that can be perceived are a sign of the vitality of this culture rather than of its decay. And if we seek to identify the forces that maintained this vitality, however hard ecclesiastics might struggle against them, a leading role must be assigned to the attractions of spectacle and performance, which continued to embody the heroes of the old culture and make them real, for so many viewers in the East.

Acknowledgement

This article gives a revised and slightly expanded version of the paper presented at the Rome conference in January 2010. The issues raised here need to be examined much more thoroughly than is possible within the limits of this paper, and I have inevitably been selective in the examples that I discuss. I hope to return to the topic in greater detail in another study. I acknowledge with thanks the support of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada for the research on which this article is based. I am also grateful to the following for assistance with illustrations: J. Balty, J.-P. Darmon, C. Depierraz, K. Gökay, S. T. Kenfield, Fr. C. Pappalardo, B. Poulsen.

Abbreviation

LIM Lexicon iconographicum mythologiae classicae

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1 The fundamental publication of Levi 1947 has only limited information about the architectural contexts, for which see Stillwell 1961. More recent studies are Kondoleon 2000, especially the articles of J. Dobbins ('The houses at Antioch', 50–61) and C. Kondoleon ('Mosaics of Antioch', 62–77); Huskinson 2004; Morvillez 2007. Campbell 1988 covers the city of Antioch, with some new information added to that of Levi. Good colour photographs, in Cimok 2000.

2 See Abadie-Reynal 2002; Abadie-Reynal, Darmon 2003; Gökay, Linant de Bellefonds, Prioux 2008; Abadie-Reynal, Ergeç 2012. Excellent colour photographs in Önal 2009; Ergeç 2007. For the paintings from the same houses see Barbet 2005.

3 Cf. Cameron 2004, esp. 220–24, 228–33: "A comprehensive knowledge of Greek myth was essential for anyone who wanted to hold his head up in polite society" (222); Brown 1992, esp. 35–41; Ewald 2004, on mythological themes on Attic sarcophagi. For the role of *paideia* in visual culture in the later Roman period, see Leader-Newby 2004, 123–71, with special reference to silver plate; Stirling 2005, 138–64, on mythological statuary; Uytterhoeven 2009.

4 Weitzmann 1941, 242–44; Levi 1947, 119–26, seeing it as "the only mosaic of Antioch which.. presents a scenic representation" (120); Huskinson 2002–3, 141–44; Stefanou 2006, 218–21. Darmon 2011 offers a different interpretation, as the return of Alkestis to Admetus, but I find insuperable difficulties in this reading, especially the proposed identification as Admetus of the mature figure in royal costume, normally taken to be Agamemnon.

5 Levi 1947, 68–87, who proposes Adonis and Aphrodite, Io and Argos, and Andromache, Odysseus, and the little Astyanax for the three doubtful panels; see esp. n. 54, p. 76, against any direct influence of stage representations, of the sort posited by Weitzmann. Stefanou 2006, 187–97, accepts Weitzmann's identifications and the derivation from Euripides, though not the close textual dependence that Weitzmann assumed; Salcuni 2005/2006, offers iconographic precisions and accepts identification of the three panels as Aphrodite and Adonis, Paris and Oenone, with Aphrodite, and (perhaps) the wedding of Jason and Medea, and an overall theme of

fatal love, dismissing the theory of theatrical inspiration. For contemporary performance, see Huskinson 2002–3, 134–41, who concludes “The influence of contemporary pantomime ... may be impossible to confirm in the iconography of these scenes, but it can surely be seen in the choice of subjects and in the general representational style of these panels” (139).

6 Abadie-Reynal 2002, 755–58; Darmon 2005, 1290–91, figs. 2, 11; Önal 2009, 34–39. For the Skyros episode in domestic contexts, see Ghedini 1997; Russenberger 2002, with earlier references; on the source in Euripides’ *Skyrioi*, see *LIMC* I (1981), 56, 58–69 s.v. Akhilleus (A. Kossatz-Deissmann).

7 Neither of these factors is by itself conclusive of a theatrical source. The costume, though originating as a stage costume, evidently became a standard method of identifying a king, and the columned background is often used to indicate an interior scene, especially one set in a palace. The question is whether, taken together with other factors, they would have suggested the stage to contemporary viewers.

8 The habit of showing the myth rather than the performance appears already in Greek vase painting of the 5th and 4th century BC; for the controversy over the relationship between these vases and tragic drama, see Green 1994; Taplin 2007, esp. 22–46. The questions of the continued performance of traditional drama under the later Empire and of its relationship to scenes of the theatre in art cannot be discussed here; for a summary see Green 1994, 142–71, and references in Dunbabin 2006, esp. ns. 1–8.

9 On pantomime see the recent studies of Garelli 2007; Webb 2008, esp. 58–94. The other main theatrical genre of the time, mime, also sometimes presented mythological themes, but normally in comic or parodied form: cf. Webb 2008, 99.

10 For the known themes of pantomime, see Garelli 2007, 267–80. On the list given by Lucian in *De Salt.* 37–61, see Garelli 2007, 259–67; it is probably not reliable in detail, but illustrates the closeness of the association envisaged between myth and pantomime. See also the list of Molloy 1996, 277–82, probably too inclusive.

11 See Görkay *et al.* 2008, 21; Slater and Cropp 2009. I discuss the mosaic and its relationship to pantomime in detail in Dunbabin 2010.

12 It is likely that there existed also a much looser category of danced mythological spectacle, of which Apuleius’ account of the *spectaculum* of the Judgement of Paris (*Met.* 10.30–34) may be a reflection, and which combined elements of classic pantomime and of mime; for doubts how to classify this, see Garelli 2007, 5, n. 17. The performances of the singing tragic actors known as *tragōidoi* also contributed to the continued vitality of mythological material, but will not have had the visual impact of the much more popular pantomimes.

13 See Uytterhoeven 2009, 325–28, citing examples mainly from Asia Minor; Talgam 2005, with examples from the area of *Palaestina* and *Arabia*; Talgam 2004; Weiss and Talgam 2002, on the mosaics of the Nile Festival Building at Sepphoris. I concentrate here as far as possible on mosaics that can be dated with at least strong probability to the 5th and 6th centuries; external grounds for dating are often absent, and many proposed dates are based on figure-style, particularly unreliable at this period. For the use of mythological images on mosaics from the 4th century onwards throughout the empire (predominantly in the West) see, Muth 2001.

14 For instance Olszewski 2001, 286, on the mosaic of Sheikh Zuweid (below n. 21); or the mosaics from the House of Charidemos at Halikarnassos (below n. 24): Poulsen 1995, esp. 203–5; Isager 1995, who proposes (216–17) that the “house was intended to serve people who ... had chosen an alternative to Christianity, the orphic/neoplatonic road”, though allowing also the possibility that the stress should be “less on religious matters and more on the general admiration for classical

culture” (repeated, with the same qualification, in Isager 1997). Also Balty 1990, 87–102, on the mosaic from Sarrîn with six mythological scenes, who concludes “Par le choix des divinités qu’on y exalte et des thèmes qu’on y développe ... la mosaïque de Sarrîn apparaît donc, dans son ensemble, comme un hymne à la fécondité garante de la permanence de la vie”, and argues that this coherence of concept and symbolism indicates the presence of “un paganisme bien vivant” (99).

15 On this question see for instance Liebeschuetz 1995; Leader-Newby 2004, chs. 3 and 4; Stirling 2005, ch. 5; Uytterhoeven 2009; Jacobs 2010; Cameron 2011, 698–742. On the nature of the “culture” displayed through images in Late Antiquity, and the range of understanding that could lie behind it, see Baratte 2001 (with examples predominantly drawn from the West).

16 Piccirillo 1989, 50–60; 1993, 23–26, 51–63, 66–67. A public function for the room has sometimes been suggested (on the basis of the city personifications in the border), but Piccirillo 2007, 154–55 shows that the architecture is that of a grand private house (“mansion”). For the date (not the mid- to late 6th century, as sometimes written) see Piccirillo 2007, 154.

17 For the iconography of the pavement, see Buschhausen in Piccirillo 1986, 117–27. The identity of the cities is much discussed, with most commentators despairing of identifying Gregoria or suggesting without much conviction that she may be meant for Constantinople. Bowersock 2006, 8–9, 81–88, argues that “Rome” at this date and in this environment should refer to the new Rome, Constantinople, and suggests Antioch, second city of the empire, for Gregoria; but this theory depends on the proposal that that city was renamed after Gregorius, patriarch of Antioch at the end of the 6th century, which would be too late for the mosaic.

18 For the Feast of Roses at Gaza, see Chuvin 1990, 116; Friedländer 1939, §1 p. 24–25, on the prologue to Prokopios’ *ekphrasis* on the painting of Phaedra and Hippolytos; Renaut 2005, 214–16, with references to further passages in Johannes of Gaza, Prokopios, and Choricus; Lupi 2012, on the myth of Aphrodite and Adonis in Gaza. For the Madaba mosaic, see Weiss and Talgam 2002, 81; Talgam 2004, 223–27.

19 The two men are labelled (ΠΑΤΡΟΚΛΟΣ and ΑΧΙΛΛΕΑΣ the two Erotes ΕΡΩΤΥ. Beside the woman is written ΕΥΒΡΕΙΣ; there was a lacuna the other side of her head (visible in the original photographs) where the name could have continued, and Piccirillo (1989, 143) restores ΕΥΒΡΕΙΣ()ΙΣΗΙΣ. There would be no parallel for the form of the name Briseis as *Eubre[iseis]*; is it possible that the mosaicist has made a muddled contamination with personifications beginning with *Eu-*, which are frequently found on mosaics at this date (for instance, *Euprepeia*)? Bowersock 2006, 50, proposes that the inscription might be a statement reading “Πάτροκλος Ἀχιλλέα εὐρεῖ”; a statement of this type would be without parallel in such a context, and his interpretation ascribes too much accuracy to the mosaicist in view of the other errors of orthography. His proposal that the woman is a Bacchant also ignores the consistent association of Briseis with Achilles (see litt. below); he does not mention the motif of the Erotes crowning her.

20 Bowersock 2006, 60–61, suggests that the nudity seen here and in some other late antique mosaics derives from the practice of nudity (real or simulated) in spectacles, but the pantomimes who performed mythological roles were not nude but wore elaborate and richly ornamented costumes. Lower-level performers, such as acrobats and jugglers, may have worn minimal clothing, and doubtless some female dancers wore highly suggestive costumes, but there is no indication that male mimes in formal performances in the theatre appeared nude or virtually nude, something that Christian preachers would have been certain to attack. Chrysostom mentions the women who swam “nude” at the Maiouma Feast (not a typical case), and speaks elsewhere of the naked limbs of actresses, and their diaphanous

costumes, though it is far from clear that he must be referring to total nudity; he has nothing to say about males. See Webb 2008, 101–2; Theophrastus 1940, 68–72; 87–88; Wiemken 1972, 204–7, on the costume of mimes.

21 Ovadiah *et al.* 1991; Olszewski 2001; Dunbabin 2008, 207–10, with earlier references. There is no objective evidence for the date; Ovadiah *et al.* (188–90) place it between the mid-4th and the mid-5th century on the grounds of style, but the earlier parallels they quote with *e.g.* Piazza Armerina are not convincing. Parallels for the inscriptions make a date in the mid-5th century or later more likely; Talgam 2004, 219, thinks the mosaic probably belongs to the 5th century or beginning of the 6th.

22 For *phthonos* and related concepts in apotropaic epigrams and other sources, both pagan and Christian, see Dunbabin and Dickie 1983. For the use of mythological figures such as Aphrodite in *encomia* and *epithalamia*, see Bowersock 1990, 64–68, and below n. 27; compare also the inscription from the Nile Festival Building at Sepphoris, with references to Hermes, the Muses, and Phoebus (Di Segni 2002, 91–97).

23 Friedländer 1939, § 25–26, pp. 13–14, 62–64. See Buschhausen in Piccirillo 1986, 124–25, who thinks (implausibly) that Prokopios' text was “la fonte letteraria” of the mosaic; Renaut 2005, 203–5, who argues that the iconographic model also inspired a real painting described by Prokopios; Talgam 2004, with a comparison between Prokopios' description of the paintings and the mosaics of Madaba and Sheikh Zuweid. The mosaic does not correspond in every detail to the text of Prokopios, where Hippolytos is described as on horseback, and accompanied by Daphne; nor is it clear if the man with a club who strikes the nurse down in Prokopios can have been present in the lacuna on the mosaic beside Hippolytos. Prokopios' text opens with a reference to Aphrodite and Adonis as examples of the power of Eros, and to the rose as a symbol of their love; see above n. 18.

24 Hinks 1933, 127–30, nos. 51a and b; Poulsen 1995, 200, 204–5; 1997, 10–13; Raeck 1992, 82–83, figs. 57–58; 1997.

25 Weiss and Talgam 2002, 75–76, fig. 13; *cf.* also 76, fig. 14, two naked male hunters with a dead boar, perhaps meant for Meleager and a companion; 77–79, fig. 15, seated couple of hunters with dancing Amazons in the foreground. Weiss and Talgam discuss the possible interpretations of all these scenes, and hesitate over the iconography of the couple; what is clear is that the mosaicist had no interest in identifying them more precisely. See also Talgam 2004, 230–33; Weiss 2009, 12–14. The building is dated to the early 5th century.

26 LIMC II (1984), 944 no. 47, which claims that “no quarry is shown”; in fact the head of the boar can just be made out at the side. Brief mention in Des Courtis, Cavalier 2001, 165, without information about dating. Another panel shows Thetis dipping the infant Achilles in the Styx, a third the busts of *Eirene* and *Euprepeia*; all are rendered in an extremely crude and unclassical style. All the panels are exhibited in Antalya Museum.

27 Cameron 2004, 237–49; *e.g.* “... a great many mythological allusions in both poets and orators ... are little more than what a grammaticus would have classified as examples of metonymy. The mere name evokes ... a particular sort of human quality or character: Odysseus cunning; Penelope fidelity; Clytemnestra or Phaedra infidelity” *etc.* (247). Compare the use of mythological parallels in the *encomia* and *epithalamia* composed in the 5th and early 6th centuries by the Egyptian poets cited in Bowersock 1990, 64–69, even when addressing the emperor Theodosius II himself (*Anth. Pal.* 15.9, by Cyrus of Panopolis); also Penella 2005, on the *epithalamia* of Choricus of Gaza.

28 Abegg-Stiftung, CH-3132 Riggisberg, Inv. 1100: Schrenk 2004, 41–45, no. 5; Raeck 1992, 84–93; Simon 1970, who argues for a close relation to the *Meleager* of

Euripides, a claim disputed by Raeck. Schrenk accepts a date at the end of the 4th or beginning of the 5th century on the basis of parallels for the dress and hairstyles.

²⁹ Choricus *Or.* 21 (= *dial.* 12) 1, 248 Foerster-Richtsteig; cf. *Or.* 29 (= *decl.* 8), 30–2, 322–23 Foerster-Richtsteig, a dancer performing Phaedra (as well as a tragic actor performing Electra and a comic actor Plangon). For a more general allusion to mimes performing “the general of the Trojans or that of the Myrmidons’ in Choricus” *Defence of mimes* (*Or.* 32 [= *or.* 8], 78, 361 Foerster-Richtsteig), see Malineau 2005, 156, who suggests that this refers to the variety of mime known as *homeristae*, who performed parodies of Homer.

³⁰ For the mythological knowledge that Chrysostom takes for granted in his flock, see the references in Leyerle 2001, e.g. 28, 31, 45, 116–17; Phaedra occurs as an example particularly frequently.

³¹ Simon 1967 already suggests that the popularity of scenes of Achilles and Briseis at this date derives from performances of the story in pantomime. See recently Bowersock 2006, 54–63, with some uncertainty as to whether the inspiration comes from mime or pantomime; Talgam 2005, 1131–36, who stresses mime and after-dinner entertainment, not pantomime (however the Hippolytos scenes at Sheikh Zuweid and Madaba she considers to be derived from Euripides’ tragedy). Cf. also Böhm 2003, on the wider question of the relationship between the theatre and late antique art.

³² In other media, or in other contexts, the tendency to isolate mythological figures from their traditional narrative context appears earlier; for instance the painted figures of mythical heroines (Penelope, Deianeira, Prothoe) who appear as a sort of gallery of illustrious women in the same 3rd-century houses as the mythological mosaics at Zeugma: Barbet 2005, 144–57, 160–68. Also Zanker 1999, on the use of Phaedra and Hippolytos on 3rd-century sarcophagi; Ewald 2004, 237–47, on Hippolytos and Achilles on 2nd–3rd century Attic sarcophagi.

ALLA RICERCA DI UN'IDENTITÀ. TRADIZIONI CLASSICHE NELLA PRIMA ICONOGRAFIA CRISTIANA

Arnaldo Marcone

C'è probabilmente stato un eccesso di fiducia nel riconoscere come esplicitamente cristiane e, al contrario, come manifestazioni di credo pagano, delle raffigurazioni che invece, a una lettura più attenta e spassionata, possono essere interpretate con maggiore verosimiglianza come manifestazioni di una ricerca di identità e, quindi, di conservatorismo e di tradizionalismo culturale e sociale. Per questa ragione parlerei appunto di “persistenza” di tradizioni classiche senza riferimenti di natura religiosa, senza implicazioni di un presunto paganesimo che implica per associazione automatica un'opposizione e una resistenza al cristianesimo. In altri termini penso come quadro di riferimento a un codice artistico condiviso. E' una considerazione che si impone anche alla luce del fatto che, da un punto di vista strettamente storiografico, sembra guadagnare consistenza la prospettiva che, al di là delle formule inevitabilmente semplificatrici di “rivoluzione costantiniana” e simili, valorizza l'idea di una conversione tutto sommato pacifica del mondo antico. Il “conflitto” tra paganesimo e cristianesimo nel IV secolo, per riprendere il titolo del convegno organizzato da A. Momigliano alla fine degli anni '50 (Momigliano 1963), e di cui si è discusso in un convegno svoltosi a Bose nell'ottobre del 2008, appare sempre più una definizione di comodo che implica dei presupposti ormai superati soprattutto quando ci si confronta con le tradizioni culturali proprie dei ceti elevati.¹

La ricerca sulla identificazione dei singoli temi figurativi in merito alla prima produzione dell'arte cristiana ha molto insistito sull'identificazione del principio ispiratore, del *Grundprinzip*, rispetto al quale tutti i temi figurativi dovrebbero trovare il loro

inquadramento. In realtà spesso nella valutazione di tali temi si è sottovalutata la tradizione e la vitalità delle esperienze artistiche romane che appaiono invero un patrimonio comune, senza una determinante pregiudiziale religiosa. Sembra ancora attuale quanto ebbe a scrivere A. Grabar una quarantina di anni fa:

“it is important to keep in mind that creativity in this area consists in appropriating existing figurations by shifting the meaning of repeated formulas, by taking over known iconographic formulas, or composing similar ones by analogy”; “the same iconographic term – the orant, the Good Shephard – has different meanings according to the context”. (Grabar 1968, xlviii)



Fig. 13.1. Corbridge lunula (IV secolo) ritrovata nel 1735 nei pressi del vallo di Adriano (British Museum, da Buckton 1994, fig. 15).

A mio modo di vedere c'è un'unità di fondo nella cultura tardoantica che sintetizza i valori comuni dei ricchi proprietari desiderosi di dare visibilità al proprio status sociale e, in taluni casi peculiari, anche alla loro personalità. Forse non ci sono parole migliori, per introdurre l'argomento che intendo trattare, di quelle di P. Brown:

“In the past several decades the history of early Christian art and of the late-antique world in which this art developed have been

subject to a series of surprises, all of them profoundly disruptive of previous certitudes".²

Mi limito a qualche esempio. Prendiamo il caso del *missorium* di Cesena ritrovato abbastanza casualmente poco dopo la fine della Seconda Guerra Mondiale (*Antiche vie* 1992, 75). La scena riprodotta è assolutamente convenzionale e riflette l'ideologia di un proprietario terriero, così come ci è testimoniata da altri documenti artistici cronologicamente vicini, come il mosaico della caccia di Eloro, o il mosaico africano del *dominus Iulius*, oppure anche la scena del medaglione centrale del cosiddetto "Hunting plate" del tesoro di Sevso. Sul registro superiore abbiamo raffigurato il *dominus* che si sta godendo i piaceri di un banchetto; in quello inferiore c'è una sorta di sintesi del mondo agrario rispetto al quale la villa è al centro. In questo caso non ci sono dubbi sull'interpretazione dell'oggetto e dell'intenzione del committente (presupposti eccessivi attribuiti ai valori ideologici delle raffigurazioni anche in Schneider 1983).

Passiamo a un'altra tipologia di oggetti. Si pensi alla "Corbridge lanx", interpretata ora come traduzione iconografica di un mito sconosciuto, per quanto affine al giudizio di Paride, oppure come congresso di divinità in una sorta di *sacra conversazione pagana* in santuari localizzati in sedi diverse, oppure ancora in altro modo (Fig. 13.1). Lo scetticismo manifestato a suo tempo da O. Brendel sembra condivisibile: "the lanx tells no story and proclaims no mysterious allegory" (Brendel 1941, 126). Si tratta, in realtà, come è il caso del piatto di Castelvint, (fine V secolo), interpretato pur in mancanza di sicuri paralleli iconografici, come illustrazione dell'episodio di Tiresia che spia Atena al bagno (Venezia, Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Favaretto *et al.* 2004, 176), di uno di quei grandi piatti decorati con scene mitologiche o di genere idilliaco-bucolico e marini diffusi in età tardoantica che si ritrovano in diversi contesti (ad esempio nel ninfeo sotto san Giovanni e Paolo a Roma) anche perché spesso prodotti per occasioni festive nell'ambito dell'aristocrazia senatoria e da ambienti vicini alle corti imperiali. Così pure mi pare dubbio che la *lanx* di Parabiago possa essere considerata – così come è stato sostenuto alla luce della eterogeneità dei temi che vi compaiono "come un documento di fede, testimone dell'adesione del committente e/o destinatario ai misteri frigi" (interpretati peraltro in chiave cosmica), in particolare per celebrare gli *Ilaria*, la principale festa romana di Cibele (Musso 1983). E neppure "pacifica" mi sembra, malgrado l'opinione di A. Alföldi, una committenza della *lanx* da parte della nobiltà senatoria impegnata nei medesimi anni nell'emissione dei contornati, giudicati anch'essi uno strumento utilizzato a sostegno del "Kulturkampf pagano" (Alföldi 1943).

Ancora mi sembra ragionevole lasciar cadere ogni ipotesi di conflitto culturale a proposito dal magnifico piatto di Achille (di 53 cm di diametro) del tesoro di Kaiseraugst (Fig. 13.2) con il medaglione centrale con la scena del ritrovamento di Achille a Sciro travestito da donna,³ lungo il bordo dieci scene di diversa ampiezza separate da colonne a spirali che raccontano la nascita e la fanciullezza e l'educazione di Achille: sembra preferibile presupporre in proposito una riproposizione, fondamentalmente priva di contenuti religiosi, dei tradizionali valori culturali dell'élite greco-romana o, forse, pensare, come è stato suggerito ora da A. Cameron, anche sulla base di un analogo piatto di terra sigillata proveniente dall'Africa Settentrionale, con 13 scene su 14 di argomento pretroiano, a cicli narrativi: l'osservatore occasionale doveva essere aiutato a identificare le scene meno familiari sulla base di quelle più note (Leader-Newby 2004; Cameron 2009). Achille, per certi aspetti, è davvero un eroe "ambiguo" nella produzione artistica tardoantica: si pensi, per esempio, all' "Achilles plate" del tesoro di Sevso (ora soprattutto Ghedini 2009).



Fig. 13.2. Piatto ottagonale di Achille di Kaiseraugst (Augst-Römermuseum, da Demandt and Engemann 2007, fig. 1.11.4).



Fig. 13.3. Cofanetto di Proiecta (Courtesy of the British Museum).

La pluralità dei motivi ispiratori e la complessità delle tradizioni

culturali emerge dal confronto, che è stato suggerito da J. Elsner e che riprendo in questa sede, tra tre diversi tipi di realizzazioni artistiche, vale a dire il cofanetto di Proiecta, il sarcofago di Iunius Bassus, la lipsanoteca di Brescia (Elsner 2008). Il cofanetto di Proiecta inquadra la vita familiare e il matrimonio in un contesto non cristiano di riprese mitologiche che presuppone quindi un quadro di riferimento di valori tradizionali. Il conflitto religioso sembrerebbe pacificamente riassorbito in questo cofanetto la cui committenza è riconducibile forse a membri conosciuti dell'aristocrazia pagana (i Secundi Turci) (Cameron 1985). Qui abbiamo un'iscrizione cristiana con un'iconografia paganeggiante: la toilette della dama, assistita dalle sue ancelle (Fig. 13.3) ha come modello quella di Venere, circondata da creature marine, Eroti e Nereidi, che non a caso è raffigurata in asse sulla parte superiore del cofanetto.

Quanto al sarcofago di Bassus, un manufatto di alta qualità artistica, malgrado l'inequivoca ispirazione cristiana, questo non rinuncia a precisi riferimenti romanocentrici che presuppongono una permanenza del quadro di riferimento dei valori dell'aristocrazia senatoria. In particolare le due scene centrali che compaiono nei due livelli in cui è suddivisa la parte anteriore del sarcofago traggono ispirazione da modelli iconografici imperiali utilizzati per gli alti magistrati. Nel registro inferiore abbiamo l'*adventus* di Cristo a Gerusalemme, un momento trionfale che è la premessa della Passione. Sul piano superiore Cristo è raffigurato in trono, sopra un'allegoria forse del cosmo, nell'atto di consegnare la legge a Pietro e a Paolo, una rappresentazione del trionfo di Cristo dopo la Resurrezione. Il sarcofago segna la netta affermazione del tema della regalità di Cristo in una dimensione ormai assolutamente cristocentrica. I rilievi dei lati rimangono però legati alla tradizione: rappresentano infatti le quattro stagioni e fanno riferimento probabilmente al ciclo della vita.

La lipsanoteca di Brescia ricolloca il presente cristiano nella sua ascendenza ebraica senza apparenti concessioni alla tradizione classica. Vero capolavoro d'intaglio, eseguito forse a Milano nel secondo decennio del IV secolo, con 21 immagini derivate dal Vecchio Testamento e 16 dal Nuovo è questa probabilmente la più notevole raccolta di raffigurazioni conosciute nel mondo cristiano nell'età di Costantino.

La ricerca dei valori simbolici può essere ingannevole. E' stato giustamente osservato, a proposito dei cosiddetti cubicoli dei sacramenti di san Callisto, come molti degli elementi che caratterizzano gli apparati decorativi riprendano quelli tipici del mondo agro-pastorale. Il messaggio primario che si intende trasmettere, da parte di famiglie che avevano i mezzi e l'interesse a far sì che i loro cari avessero una degna sepoltura, è un'idea di pace e di

serenità: se mai si può pensare a una selezione dal repertorio classico tale da rendere i temi prescelti, di per sé neutri, compatibili con il messaggio cristiano. Ed è su queste basi che si viene formarsi la prima specifica iconografia biblica, all'inizio stereotipa e semplificata (Carletti 1989). Un'indicazione importante ci è fornita proprio da uno scrittore cristiano, Clemente Alessandrino (II—III sec. d.C.) che nel *Pedagogo*, nel consigliare ai fedeli delle immagini da usare nei sigilli compatibili con l'etica della fede da loro professata, scrive:

“le immagini dei nostri sigilli dovranno essere una colomba o un pesce o una nave a vela, oppure una lira usata da Policrate, o un'ancora usata da Seleuco come sigillo: se esso ritrae un pescatore richiamerà sempre alla memoria l'apostolo e i bambini tirati su dalle acque” (Clemente Alessandrino 3, 59, 2).

Aquileia, la cui accresciuta importanza negli equilibri politici del IV secolo è ben nota, può valere come caso esemplare.⁴ Qui sembra di potersi riconoscere la vicinanza tematica delle raffigurazioni presenti nei luoghi di culto a quelle delle *domus* private. Tra le ragioni che rendono così peculiari i mosaici della basilica aquileiese c'è l'attenzione che gli artisti dimostrano per aspetti minuti, non essenziali, rispetto ai motivi fondamentali di ispirazione della loro opera. D'altra parte nessun messaggio doveva essere più efficace per dei cristiani, soprattutto se di fresca conversione, del riproporre in una luce radicalmente nuova, si direbbe definitiva, soggetti che erano loro familiari.

Ancora a proposito delle incongruenze in cui si può incorrere nelle ricerche di valori simbolici. Il caso della figura del buon pastore è indicativo. Per quanto si presti ad essere associata alla nota parabola evangelica della pecorella smarrita, essa ha un chiaro modello nell'immagine di Hermes crioforo e psicopompo per passare quindi a impersonare la *virtus* filantropica. Aggiungo che lo stesso motivo dei tralci di vite carichi di grappoli, quando pure hanno valenza cristiana, è compatibile, in virtù delle assonanze dionisiache, anche con ambienti culturalmente tradizionalisti. In buona sostanza ci sono temi figurativi propri della tradizione classica che si adattano a essere recepiti e utilizzati con connotazioni cristiane. A cambiare, nella continuità del motivo iconografico, è la loro valenza semantica. Si può escludere, quindi, che questi potessero essere degli “Ursymbole” dell'arte cristiana, cioè creazioni genuinamente ed esclusivamente cristiane sorte indipendentemente dalla tradizione classica.

Proprio la figura del crioforo, che poteva ricevere un arricchimento semantico dall'immagine mitologica di Hermes psicopompo, valeva come immagine sintetica ed evocatrice di ideali di umanità e di filantropia cui poteva corrispondere l'allegoria dell'aion con i quattro

putti stagionali. E secondo uno slittamento semantico tutto sommato ben comprensibile il simbolismo stagionale del Sole poteva essere trasferito a Cristo che, così come il contadino, dà mano alle diverse occupazioni agricole a seconda delle stagioni, regola la successione degli anni, stagione dopo stagione. Vi si può vedere un completamento di quella “filantropica del buon pastore” che, come simbolo, poteva contare su un’iconografia consolidata.

La figura del pastore è quella che si incontra con maggiore frequenza nell’arte paleocristiana tanto è vero che si è arrivati a contarne sino a poco meno di novecento rappresentazioni (Schumacher 1977). Tuttavia è bene ricordare come la figura del pastore non necessariamente coincide con quella del “buon pastore” per la quale la fonte evangelica è la nota parabola di Giovanni (cap. 10). In realtà la metafora del pastore arrivava alla Chiesa cristiana anche attraverso altri canali, il primo dei quali è l’Antico Testamento ove è questione del Dio di Israele che è “pastore” del suo popolo. Dunque la fortuna dell’immagine del pastore nell’iconografia paleocristiana si nutre in ogni caso di una tradizione complessa (ebraica e pagana classica prima che cristiana in senso stretto) che l’ha favorita.

Qualche esempio può essere utile per illustrare il mio discorso. Desidero fare almeno un sommario riferimento al noto mosaico aquileiese raffigurante il cosiddetto “pastore dall’abito singolare” le cui incongruenze non possono non colpire (Plate 28). La presenza nel mosaico di un recipiente pieno di latte e di una pecora e di una capra sembra connotare il soggetto come pastorale anche se ci sono elementi, come il nimbo e la destra che è stesa in avanti in un gesto che fa pensare all’*adlocutio*, che possono suggerire una combinazione di motivi iconografici diversi. Ad ogni buon conto l’abito del pastore, di foggia così chiaramente orientale, è davvero “singolare”, nel senso che potrebbe essere stata modificato rispetto alla sue caratteristiche originarie (ci sono tracce di pesanti restauri già in antico) per propiziare un’utilizzazione in senso cristiano: non a caso ora, rifiutato quello che si considera il pregiudizio cristianizzante da taluni, come G. L. Grassigli, la scena è considerata di genere, come altre di soggetto analogo di Milano e di Desenzano, e, quindi, è stata ridenominata come di “*dominus* in paesaggio agreste” (Grassigli 1999, 237—240). Il fatto che il mosaico sia chiuso ai vertici dalle figure delle quattro stagioni, così come la presenza di due grandi pavoni e di due fagiani, sembra fornire una conferma di questa lettura.

Colpisce il confronto, sempre ad Aquileia, con il Buon Pastore dell’aula teodoriana meridionale che è raffigurato con una qualche ingenua semplicità da una mano di artista, certo meno esperto di quelli che hanno lavorato agli altri ritratti, come un giovinetto,

apparentemente librato a mezz'aria, che impugna una rozza siringa e regge sulle spalle un agnello mentre un altro, ai suoi piedi, lo guarda fiducioso (Menis 1965, tav. 24). Che nel sarcofago detto appunto “del buon pastore” del museo Pio Cristiano il buon pastore con la pecora sulle spalle sia raffigurato attorniato da amorini vendemmianti (secondo taluni immagini delle anime del Paradiso) non sorprende.

Consideriamo la figura di Orfeo. La figura di Orfeo si prestava già nella cultura pagana a un interscambio con quella di Apollo musageta e fu quindi riutilizzata per la raffigurazione di Davide salmista. La compresenza di Cristo-Orfeo e di Davide nel cunicolo di Domitilla suggerisce l'intenzione di sottolineare la relazione tra Antico e Nuovo Testamento. Nella pittura cimiteriale l'immagine inizia a comparire nella seconda metà del III secolo. In un cubicolo di Callisto Orfeo è raffigurato, nella volta, quasi a sottolinearne il valore simbolico di immagine di figura di Cristo, tra due ovin. Non mancano le varianti nella raffigurazione di Orfeo. Nell'arcosolio della catacomba dei santi Marcellino e Pietro, della seconda metà del IV secolo, per quanto Orfeo sia raffigurato seduto con gli strumenti musicali, non compie l'atto di suonare ma con le braccia aperte, in un gesto che può apparire simbolico, mentre lo sguardo è rivolto verso l'alto forse per suggerire un riferimento trascendente (Bisconti 2000).

E' interessante come la figura di Orfeo risulti chiaramente funzionale in diversi contesti, con peculiari slittamenti semantici, alla celebrazione della figura del *dominus* per la quale doveva essere secondario lo stretto riferimento religioso. Basterà fare qualche esempio. A Rimini, nello scavo recente di piazza Ferrari, il cantore tracio è raffigurato al centro di un pavimento di una *domus* in cui in sei esagoni disposti intorno a lui sono rappresentati vari animali attratti dalla musica. Poiché, in ragione degli attrezzi chirurgici che sono stati ritrovati nella casa, si può ritenere che il proprietario fosse un medico sembra plausibile che le competenze del committente fossero messe in parallelo con quelle di Orfeo che, secondo una versione del mito, era riuscito a strappare Euridice alla morte (Ortalli 2000; De Carolis 2009). A Piazza Armerina la figura di Orfeo sembra presupporre una serie complessa di rimandi alla cultura del proprietario, idealmente concepito come *mousikos aner*, con la musica celebrata per il suo potere spirituale.

I soggetti latamente mitologici, che possono essere sottoposti a processi di desementizzazione o di risementizzazione in quanto utilizzati a celebrare la persona del committente, sono i più vari. Prendiamo il caso di una *domus* di IV secolo recentemente scavata a Faenza in piazza Dogana di cui sono venuti alla luce degli ambienti di rappresentanza. A noi interessa la scena che adornava un vestibolo che precedeva una sala absidata, probabilmente di ricevimento. Nella

fascia perimetrale si susseguono una serie di figure virili in armi, alternate da altre femminili. La raffigurazione principale è incentrata su un personaggio maschile, parzialmente coperto da un mantello fermato sulla spalla destra, seduto su una sorta di trono, circondato da uomini in armi mentre ai suoi piedi si vedono corazze e scudi (*domus* di Faenza). Sembra accettabile l'idea di vedervi un'immagine riassuntiva delle imprese di Achille, un ulteriore esempio, dunque, della fortuna dell'eroe mitico nella Tarda Antichità utilizzato in modo diverso a seconda dei contesti (Maioli 1990). E' naturalmente impossibile immaginare quale concreto legame ci potesse essere tra il proprietario e la scena mitologica da lui voluta riprodurre con tanta evidenza nella sua casa. Ma certo lascia intendere le sue ambizioni culturali per le quali il tradizionalismo del quadro di riferimento non ha di per sé nette implicazioni religiose.

Per tornare ad Aquileia basterà solo un cenno al mosaico aquileiese di Licurgo e Ambrosia, che sembra da attribuirsi a botteghe locali, della *domus* del fondo CAL, che rappresenta una delle testimonianze più tarde della persistenza di soggetti classici —a prescindere dall'eventuale intenzione religiosa dei committenti che, in mancanza di un contesto, è difficile da valutare—in un'Aquileia ormai cristianizzata. Da escludere sono interpretazioni di tipo psicologico sulla crisi del mondo antico: se mai sembra vero il contrario e, cioè, che ci si possa vedere una consapevole affermazione di identità nel riproporre temi colti. E' evidente che i medesimi artigiani servivano indifferentemente i ricchi proprietari, ancora sensibili ai richiami della tradizione classica, e l'importante committenza cristiana nella quale dovevano essere comunque ben presenti coloro i quali si compiacevano di riproporre i temi mitologici colti, per i quali presumibilmente si prescindeva dalla valenza religiosa.

D'altra parte l'utilizzazione del mito in chiave personale, con evidenti riferimenti alla cultura dei committenti, ha un riscontro nel noto mosaico della *domus* conosciuta come di Caliendo e Iovina, raffigurati come Amore e Psiche, un tema favolistico idoneo, attraverso un processo di cristianizzazione, a essere reso compatibile con la nuova fede (Grassigli 1999, 231—52). E' interessante come il significato di questa scena, che suggerisce un immediato rimando al romanzo di Apuleio, datata in genere alla seconda metà del III secolo, possa risultare rafforzato da quello delle Stagioni nel vano accanto.

Che, d'altra parte, l'arte cristiana attingesse al repertorio di quella classica è ben comprensibile soprattutto nel campo dell'ideologia della gloria e del trionfo, per il quale la nuova religione mancava di espliciti e fruibili modelli iconografici. E' il caso della Vittoria che compare nella monetazione di IV secolo per celebrare la vittoriosità degli imperatori in virtù della loro adesione al culto cristiano. L'uso

allegorico della Vittoria, soprattutto in ambito funerario, nel senso del premio della vita eterna riservato al buon cristiano al termine della sua esistenza terrena, è in qualche modo un corollario di un tema ben presente nell'immaginario tardoantico. E' dubbio che si possa leggere la nota raffigurazione della basilica aquileiese della "Vittoria", raffigurata come una fanciulla che reca la palma e una corona di alloro con ai suoi piedi un canestro con pani e forse un altro con spighe, come "Vittoria eucaristica" (Plate 29) (Mian 1975). Appare preferibile vedervi un'immagine di genere, familiare, e dunque facilmente apprezzabile, al di là di un immediato ed esplicito riferimento religioso, che si prestava a una rilettura in chiave cristiana.

Un esempio notevole di commistione di temi e motivi cristiani con altri, per i quali è innegabile la derivazione classica, si ha nei mosaici dell'arco trionfale di S. Maria Maggiore risalenti al pontificato di Sisto III, dunque tra il 432 e il 440: "Probably the most extensive and most suggestive example of the iconographic influence of imperial art" (Grabar 1968, 47). All'interno di un ciclo raffigurante l'infanzia di Gesù nella scena dell'Annunciazione Maria è abbigliata in modo insolitamente sontuoso. Vi si può vedere l'influenza del cerimoniale imperiale. Vero è che la Vergine è presentata come una matrona romana intenta a filare. Ma la sua immagine risulta perfettamente compatibile con quella di una *clarissima femina* dell'aristocrazia senatoria: Simmaco, l'oratore appartenente all'élite senatoria pagana di fine IV secolo, in una lettera caratterizza la figlia, moglie di uno degli ultimi leaders del paganesimo romano, Virio Nicomaco Flaviano, nei termini tradizionali della *matrona lanifica*. Al di sopra di Maria compare la colomba dello Spirito Santo e l'arcangelo Gabriele con le ali spiegate e accanto sono tre angeli con nimbo e ali. Si aggiunga che i mosaici dell'arco trionfale pongono una stretta relazione tra gli eventi della Bibbia ebraica, che sono narrati nelle navate laterali, con quelli associati con la nascita di Cristo: al centro c'è il tema teologico della celebrazione della Vergine *Theotokos*. In santa Maria Maggiore una potente istituzione sociale, politica e religiosa reinterpretava la storia ebraica, il popolo ebraico come precursori, tipi e segni della realizzazione delle promesse divine nel cristianesimo.

La letteratura colta offre suggestivi e interessanti punti di contatto e di confronto. Il caso di Nonno di Panopoli, uno dei poeti greci più ricchi di erudizione della Tarda Antichità, appare esemplare. Come ha suggerito uno dei più acuti esegeti della sua poesia, E. Livrea, l'intenzione di Nonno sembra essere stata quella di raccogliere tutti i miti che si riferiscono "a una delle più nobili ed elevate soteriologie elleniche, quella del Dionisismo" (Livrea 2000). Il pubblico cui si rivolgeva doveva comprendere, con i cristiani ancora impegnati di

cultura ellenistica, quegli ultimi pagani che vedevano proprio nel tradizionalismo culturale il baluardo della loro identità (Miguélez Caverio 2004). Né va sottovalutata la contiguità che si può presupporre tra le scene dei mosaici, che possiamo considerare “scene di genere”, nel senso che le raffigurazioni di paesaggio, di idillio marittimo-pastorale, sanno trasmettere ancora l’idea dei piaceri della vita familiari all’uomo antico, e le elaborazioni letterarie, rispetto alle quali i temi dionisiaci avranno giocato un ruolo particolarmente importante. L’enciclopedismo di Nonno sembra aver avuto come scopo quello di proporre, nella rivisitazione dei documenti del culto antico di un dio salvatore, un’immagine positiva del mondo intellettuale che aveva prodotto quella mitologia, forse perché inconsapevolmente antipatrice del grande mistero dell’Incarnazione.

La delicatezza dell’intreccio dei temi figurativi sembra particolarmente evidente proprio nella basilica teodoriana di Aquileia che, nella sua articolata e complessa struttura, si colloca in una tappa precoce nell’evoluzione dell’edificio di culto cristiano. Pare dunque conveniente interrogare con prudenza filologica le polisemie delle raffigurazioni mosaicali e verificare in che misura esse possano essere ancora essere portatrici di temi propri della decorazione pavimentale domestica delle *domus* tardoantiche. Anche nei mosaici teodoriani, prima che pensare a messaggi intenzionalmente orientati in senso religioso, è lecito vedere un repertorio neutrale su cui la simbologia cristiana si sarà progressivamente inserita. Alcuni temi appaiono innocentemente profani: e la stessa convergenza di temi bucolici e marini non è estranea alla fortuna di un genere che ha precisi riscontri nell’iconografia funeraria tra la fine del III e l’inizio del IV secolo, in un’epoca dunque vicina a quella di realizzazione dei mosaici aquileiesi quando il tema del *locus amoenus* acquista un rinnovato favore.

I repertori bucolici e dionisiaci, nelle loro commistioni, legati alla gioiosa esaltazione della vita della natura, continuarono a essere apprezzati per tutto il VI secolo e oltre: al regno di Eraclio (610—641) risale una serie di piatti argentei uno dei quali con sileno e menadi danzanti (Canuti 1999, 9). In realtà la fortuna delle quattro Stagioni nei pavimenti ecclesiali, ben attestata per il VI secolo nel Vicino Oriente, attesta come l’intenzione catechetica cristiana potesse ben assimilare personificazioni tradizionali classiche.

Un tema, quello del *locus amoenus* indubbiamente nella Tarda Antichità acquisisce connotazioni peculiari, quando la solitudine diventa un valore assolutamente positivo (Schlapbach, 2007). Ne è un buon esempio questo passo del *de laude eremi* di Eucherius:

*“Lirinum meam honore complector quae procellosi naufragiis
piissimis ulmis receptat venientes ab illo saeculi flagrantes aestu*

blande introducit sub umbras suas, ut illic spiritum sub illa interiore domini umbra anhelat resumant. Aquis scatens, herbis virens, floribus renitens, viribus odoribusque iocunda, paradisum possidentibus se exhibet quem possidebunt". (de laude eremi 42).

E' interessante come il genere bucolico si presti evidentemente a contaminazioni di motivi e temi iconografici: in buon esempio si ha proprio nel tema del buon pastore che vigila sugli animali dispersi, secondo un'iconografia che ha il suo punto di arrivo forse più celebre nella rappresentazione del mausoleo di Galla Placidia. Qui abbiamo un giovane pastore dai lunghi capelli dalle vesti d'oro adagiato sulle rocce dove fa pascolare il suo gregge mentre a sant'Apollinare in Classe, poco più di un secolo dopo, è il vescovo che conduce un gregge di dodici pecore attraverso un lussureggiante paesaggio fiorito. In realtà, nonostante la sua ampia diffusione, il buon pastore non esorcizzò mai la campagna (Mathews 2000, 395). Il paesaggio, nella tipica sensibilità tardoantica, è associato all'idea dei piaceri terreni e, quindi, è portatore di tradizionali valori classici.

Meritano una riflessione, infine, i mosaici che sono stati portati alla luce agli inizi degli anni '90 a Ravenna nel cosiddetto complesso di via D'Azeglio. Nell'edificio, che risulta risalire alla metà del VI secolo, in una delle sale di rappresentanza è stato ritrovato un notevole mosaico pavimentale policromo con un emblema figurato rettangolare con danza dei geni delle stagioni (Plate 30). Non so se, davvero, la danza cosmica delle stagioni di Ravenna possa essere riconducibile a una qualche rappresentazione teatrale o dionisiaca (Leader-Newby 2004, 137) o non convenga presupporre semplicemente un proprietario di notevoli mezzi economici e di cultura tradizionalista, che magari aveva portato con sé dall'Oriente un'ispirazione ancora radicata nel tardo Ellenismo bizantino. Nel settore est del complesso, risalente a una fase anteriore, in una stanza abbiamo un emblema quadrato all'interno di un tappeto a cerchi annodati. Vi è raffigurato un giovinetto con tunica corta fra due pecore di cui ne accarezza una. All'albero di destra è appesa una siringa (Plate 31). Non ci sono in realtà elementi per vedere nel mosaico una raffigurazione del Buon Pastore e, quindi, nell'edificio un ambiente di culto.

I versi di Nonno mi sembrano illuminanti di una temperie culturale, di un atteggiamento mentale rispetto al quale si può forse prescindere anche da contesti regionali:

"Le quattro Stagioni sono salutate dalle figlie del Tempo che volano a formare una corona intorno al seggio fiammante dell'auriga infaticabile, le dodici Ore cicliche, ancelle del Sole, che scortano il suo carro fiammeggiante, sacerdotesse che si

alternano nei misteri dell'Anno; al celeste dominatore di tutto l'universo hanno piegato il collo come sudditi", (Dionisiache, XII, vv. 15 ss. trad. D. Gigli Piccardi).

E' notevole come da questo passo si evinca che il trascorrere ciclico del tempo è sentito come una sorta di celebrazione di un mistero. Non dimentichiamo che il cristianesimo adatta e applica a Cristo la "metafora solare" ed alcuni aspetti soteriologici della teologia solare. Il simbolismo delle stagioni in rapporto al sole è trasferito a Cristo. Zeno di Verona nel suo *De nativitate Domini et maiestate*, trattato scritto non a caso per il 25 dicembre, giorno della nascita del Salvatore ma anche *Natalis Solis Invicti*, è paragonato al Sole che sorge e tramonta così come i 12 apostoli sono equiparati ai dodici segni dell'anno, ai dodici segni dello zodiaco, alle 12 ore del giorno. I cristiani si preoccupano comprensibilmente di differenziare l'immagine di Cristo, che è sole di giustizia e luce spirituale. Ambrogio nel suo inno *Splendor paternae gloriae* ha cantato Cristo come *verus Sol* (Wallraff 2001).

Resta illuminante della complessità dei valori semantici dell'iconografia cristiana e dei suoi presupposti classici e, più specificamente, tardoantichi, il mosaico con Cristo-Helios nel sepolcro dei Giulii nella necropoli Vaticana per il quale, con tutta la cautela del caso, una datazione di inizio IV secolo, forse all'inizio del regno di Costantino, sembra plausibile (Menna 2006). Si tratta di una raffigurazione di particolare interesse anche perché si tratta di una delle prime testimonianze di mosaico parietale di soggetto cristiano. Di per sé l'immagine di *Helios*, inserita in un contesto dominato dal motivo dei tralci vitinei, non ha nulla di specificamente cristiano. Al contrario gli elementi che la caratterizzano ne sottolineano la continuità con la sua raffigurazione tradizionalmente pagano-classica: il nimbo radiato, il globo, la quadriga. Si tratta, d'altra parte, di un'immagine dalle importanti valenze ancora per l'ideologia imperiale nell'Impero costantiniano: si pensi, per limitarsi all'esempio forse più evidente, alla raffigurazione del sole sulla quadriga sul lato orientale dell'arco di Costantino a Roma, che è un'immagine del potere dell'imperatore sugli elementi naturali. Si aggiungano le significative analogie che si riscontrano tra la raffigurazione nei due tondi dell'arco con quella della *lanx* di Parabiago nel cui campo superiore Helios ascende sulla quadriga preceduta da Phosphoros mentre a destra Selene dirige verso il basso la corsa della biga tirata da due tori davanti a cui vola Hesperos.

Non è fuori luogo ricordare come la compartecipazione al divino fosse già sviluppata in età tetrarchica e che essa era stata sviluppata proprio da Costantino in particolare grazie al concetto di *numen* che

poi sarebbe stato identificato con una divinità solare: non a caso Costantino è talvolta celebrato, all'inizio del suo regno, come colui che, con la vittoria, dissipa le tenebre e riporta la luce.

Vero è, d'altra parte, che quanto più centrale è la figura del dio solare nella composizione, tanto più è verosimile che sia visto come un salvatore e che quindi possa essere messo in relazione con Cristo da parte di un committente cristiano o da un semplice osservatore. Sembra in realtà plausibile supporre che la decorazione del sepolcro dei Giulii sia espressione di un quadro di riferimento figurativo eclettico, per il quale la connotazione cristiana deriva dalla giustapposizione di elementi di origine diversa (Wallraff 2001, 161).

Abbiamo a che fare con una concezione di fondo che non sembra diversa da quella che è all'origine del pavimento musivo della basilica aquileiese dove l'ispirazione generale, tradizionalmente paradisiaca, è come riorientata in senso cristiano dalla storia di Giona e dalla figura del Buon Pastore, in cui si può cogliere un adattamento della storia di Endimione dormiente. La storia di Giona è un tema notoriamente fortunato nelle raffigurazioni dei sarcofagi paleocristiani come ad esempio in quello di santa Maria Antiqua: un mostro marino, un *ketos*, figura anche nella decorazione del cosiddetto "Great Dish" del Mildenhall treasure, che consta di 34 pezzi di argento (Painter 1977). Credo che per un osservatore medio fosse spontaneo prescindere, almeno a un primo sguardo, dalla lettura allegorica e che istintivamente vedesse la raffigurazione di Giona beatamente dormiente sotto un pergolato da cui pendono delle zucche nell'ultima campata dell'aula teodoriana meridionale come quella di una scena realistica e, tutto sommato, banale di ozio campestre (Plate 32).

Lo stesso mare, in fondo, è troppo ricco di pesci, e di pescatori impegnati nella pesca, perché essi non richiamino in primo luogo su di loro l'attenzione. D'altra parte scene di pesca e di pastori si trovano su pavimenti contemporanei delle case del fondo Cal lungo la via Giulia Augusta. I possibili livelli di lettura delle scene dei mosaici sono diversi ma è del tutto plausibile che la fonte di ispirazione fosse condivisa e tradizionale. In realtà la pluralità dei motivi iconografici che sono alla base dei temi sviluppati nei mosaici delle due aule della basilica aquileiese è oltremodo eloquente: essi derivano, prima che da fonti vetero e neotestamentarie, dall'iconografia aulica e imperiale, dalla mitologia pagana, da repertori generici ellenistici e, addirittura, dalla criptografia misterica (così si interpreta ingene il motivo della lotta del gallo con la tartaruga). Tale eterogeneità di genesi suggerisce, a mio modo di vedere, non tanto la spregiudicatezza intellettuale della società aquileiese nel corso della sua cristianizzazione quanto il forte radicamento nella tradizione antica di un messaggio iconografico che proprio ad essa attingeva la sua forza per farsi recepire. In questo io

vedo la persistenza di quello che più che “paganesimo” chiamerei tradizionalismo culturale e la forza del suo valore di tessuto connettivo anche in ambiente cristiano.

Si deve accettare l'idea che a taluni aristocratici premeva che il cristianesimo apparisse il più “classico” possibile e che, comunque, soprattutto taluni oggetti di particolare pregio, come i grandi piatti in argento, valessero prevalentemente come espressione di *paideia*, intesa come conoscenza di tradizioni culturali e religiose classiche, e non come adesione a un culto specifico. Una raffigurazione mitologica non è di per sé manifestazione di professione religiosa: in questo senso i *Saturnali* di Macrobio possono dare un'idea di come la religione potesse essere oggetto di discussione all'interno di un gruppo di aristocratici per i quali gli ideali di *paideia* si combinano con la conoscenza, più che con l'appartenenza, delle tradizioni religiose (Leader-Newby 2004, 142 e 153. Anche Muth 1998 e Ghetta 2008). Si tratta, alla fine, di un complesso ed affascinante processo di storia culturale prima ancora che religiosa in cui avranno interagito le intenzioni dei committenti, le competenze delle maestranze e le aspettative dei destinatari.

Abbreviation

ILS Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae

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1 Brown-Lizzi 2011. Riprendo in questa sede alcune considerazioni da me svolte in quel convegno. Desidero ricordare la prudente e autocritica considerazione, segno di una sensibilità che si direbbe infallibile nel cogliere il mutare delle temperie storiografiche, premessa da Arnaldo Momigliano alla traduzione italiana del libro (Einaudi, Torino 1968), p. XI: “E’ probabile che nessuno di noi collaboratori scriverebbe esattamente ora come scrivemmo nel 1959. Profondamente riveduto dovrebbe essere soprattutto il mio saggio iniziale”. Ora si deve tener conto di Cameron 2011.

2 Brown 2008.

3 Il soggiorno di Achille a Sciro vantava una lunga tradizione anche iconografica: Ghedini 1997, 247.

4 Ripropongo in parte in quanto segue delle considerazioni già da me svolte in un intervento svolto in occasione della XXXVIII settimana di studi aquileiesi (Aquileia, maggio 2007) *Le persistenze classiche e pagane: un inquadramento generale* in “La cristianizzazione dell’Adriatico” (a cura di G. Cuscito), *Antichità Altoadriatiche* LXVI, Trieste 2008, 19–44 = Marcone 2008, 184–203. In proposito vorrei segnalare il mio debito di riconoscenza nei confronti di Giuseppe Cuscito per molti proficui scambi di idee e di informazioni di ogni genere.

USING AND ABUSING IMAGES IN LATE ANTIQUITY (AND BEYOND): COLUMN MONUMENTS AS TOPOI OF IDOLATRY

Troels Myrup Kristensen

The destruction of idols is a frequent theme in late antique literature, especially in hagiographies and ecclesiastical histories; both genres vehemently promoted the notion of Christian “triumph” over paganism (Caseau 2001, 79–86; 2011). Scholars have considered such accounts to rely heavily, if not entirely on literary *topoi*: that is, stock formulas or rhetorical devices deriving from biblical sources or earlier works, which do not necessarily reflect any historical reality and as such can be regarded more or less completely as fictional creations or flights of the imagination. However, it remains worthwhile to try to understand the wide dissemination of these themes or *topoi*. When patterns can be identified in the narrative structure of texts, it indeed gives us valuable knowledge of the expectations that early Christian readers (and viewers in the case of visual representations) had of such accounts. We can at least assume that these narratives must have resonated with the particular worldview of their audiences in order for them to be engaging, convincing and ultimately worth copying. For example, in the case of the Christian destruction of idols, why did this particular theme become so popular among contemporary audiences? What function did it serve in different contexts, both rhetorical and historical? The repetition that we see in the use of such themes was in itself clearly intended to have a particular function within the larger narrative. As such, it should not simply be ignored or discarded as a source for historical enquiry.

This paper studies one aspect of the construction of a *topos* of idolatry in Christian texts and images, namely the depiction of pagan column monuments with statues on top. It will be shown that such column monuments were frequently used in the visual and textual

construction of idolatry from as early as the 4th century and came to have a particular meaning, signifying idol worship. However, the defining feature of a pagan cult statue was not its location on a column, but rather the presence of an altar on which sacrifices could be made. It was this ritual context in which images were placed that defined their sacred character. So why did the column monument, one of several pagan sculptural media used in worship, become such a potent symbol of idolatry? Why was this particular mode of representation chosen to serve as archetypal idol in a wide range of Christian texts and images? I will argue that the answer to this question lies not simply in Christian intolerance and ignorance of pagan cult practices, but just as much in the heterogeneous nature of cult statues in Roman religion and the subsequent need for Christians to emphasise image worship by the use of a stable iconographic language. Depicting pagan cult images on columns highlighted their idolatrous nature and set them apart from other forms of representation and, furthermore, made their fall even more dramatic and visually appealing.

In the Roman period, column monuments served a variety of functions, some sacred, but most frequently profane. In that way, they were not any different from other sculptural media that were also used in both of these spheres. Among the largest and most famous examples in Rome are state monuments, such as the relief-covered columns of Trajan and Marcus Aurelius, constructed in the first quarter of the 2nd century and the end of the 2nd century, respectively (Lepper and Frere 1988; Claridge 1993; Beckmann 2011). The Column of Trajan in particular has been regarded as an innovation of its age, as it combined elements of the free-standing honorific column (a column crowned with a portrait statue), the stair-tower (the column could be climbed by means of internal stairs) and the obelisk (Jones 1993). Both columns were crowned with imperial portrait statues, but were without any cultic significance. Furthermore, statues on columns frequently appeared in hippodromes, notably the Circus Maximus (Humphrey 1986, 267–69).

Beginning with Diocletian and Maximian in 303, the Forum Romanum became increasingly crowded by the erection of imperial portraits that were placed on top of tall columns, including several depicting the Tetrarchs who had been responsible for the persecution of the Empire's Christian communities, most famously in the case of the Monument of Five Columns, one of which also held a statue of Jupiter. Similar columns are also found in the provinces, albeit without relief decoration, such as the granite column of Diocletian in Alexandria that was topped by a colossal porphyry statue of the emperor (Kristensen 2009, 166). In spite of its colossal dimensions

and placement in a sanctuary, this column was not an object of cult. Monumental columns with statues on top could also be employed as funerary markers, which they served to visually amplify in the landscape. One example of such a monument is found at Yaat in the Bekaa valley in Lebanon, originally standing some 22 m tall and thus impressively marking the site of a grave (Fig. 14.1; Parrot 1929). Representations of certain types of cult statues show them on a small column or pillar-like base, for example, in the case of Diana (Poulsen 2009, 408–11), but this was far from always the norm. In the north-western provinces, column monuments furthermore served as a representational form that was tied to local religious traditions, specifically in the shape of the so-called Jupiter columns that are known in large numbers from Gaul and Germany (Woolf 2001; Sauer 2003, 55–57; Noelke 2006).

The continued knowledge of these types of monuments into Late Antiquity is evident from a 5th-century textile fragment from Egypt, now in the Brooklyn Museum, that shows mythological figures or statues on top of columns (Brooklyn Museum 1941, 68, cat. no. 209). Statues on columns are furthermore found on two spectacular textile fragments, now in the Abegg-Stiftung (Schrenk 2004, 61–63, cat. no. 13, 63–64, cat. no. 14). Several monumental columns crowned with statues are, of course, also known from the cityscape of Constantinople (such as the columns of Constantine, Theodosius and Arcadius, all of which were placed as the centrepieces of monumental fora), and it has been suggested that these played a particularly important role in establishing this particular *topos* in images and texts. The porphyry Column of Constantine supported a nude image of Constantine with a radiate crown (likening him to the sun god Helios) until the 12th century when it was replaced with a cross by the emperor Manuel I Comnenus (Bardill 2012, 28–42). It would thus have been visible to some of the readers and viewers of the texts and images that are under discussion here. However, it seems more probable that it is the motif's more generic quality as a signifier of idolatry that explains the chronological endurance of the theme, especially considering that several of the examples discussed in the following do not demonstrate any relationship to known column monuments.

In the following, I will look at how pagan column monuments with statues were represented in late antique and medieval Christian texts and images, before I turn to a concluding discussion of their prevalence and function across this time span. The paper covers a small selection of examples dating from the 4th century up to roughly the 13th century. Of course, several depictions of idols are found after this date (for example, idols on columns are prominently depicted in

Niklaus Manuel's *King Josiah having Idols Destroyed*, dated to 1527, see McColl 2009, 200), but it would simply be impossible to cover them all in this short paper. The wide chronological framework has been chosen to emphasise the vitality of the use of the theme from Late Antiquity to medieval times. I will begin with textual references to idolatrous column monuments and then move on to their appearance in Christian visual culture, focusing on some specific contexts in which they were used as well as abused.

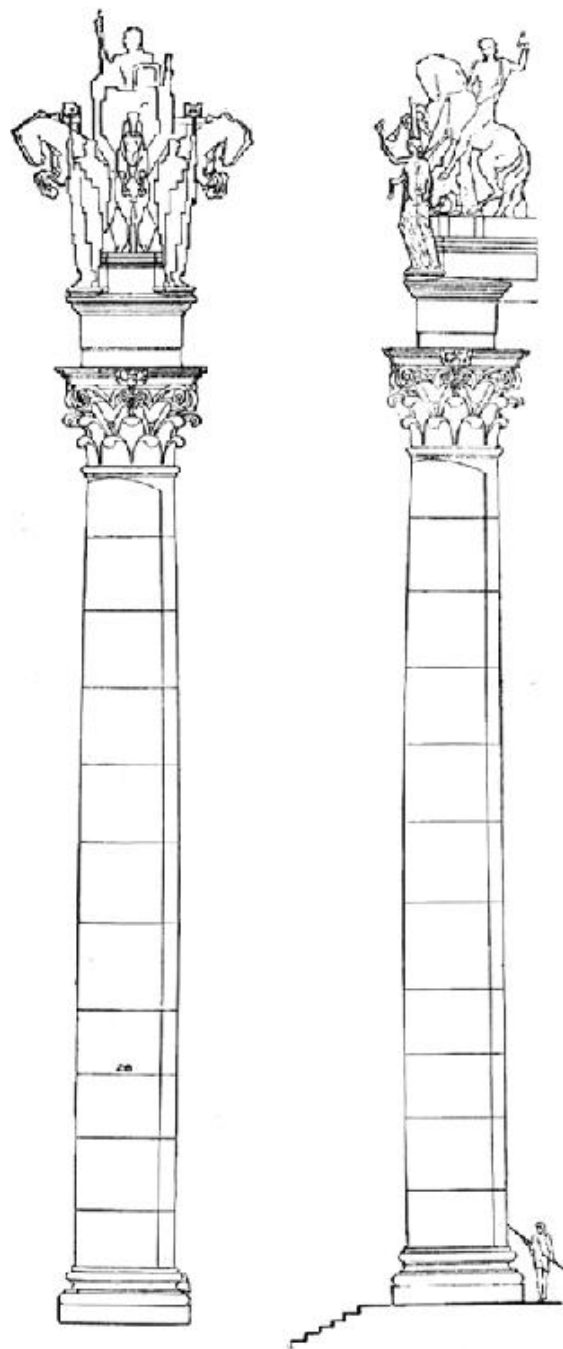


Fig. 14.1. Reconstruction of the funerary column at Yaat (after Parrot 1929, 110).

Pagan column monuments in Christian texts

In late antique Christian hagiographies, the destruction of pagan idols was from very early on simply what was expected of saints and as such constituted a *topos*, similar to the excruciating and inhuman suffering of martyrs as well as the performance of miracles, which are also frequently observed in this genre. For this reason the historical value of hagiographies has long been a topic of intense discussion, evident from the varied responses to the publication of David Frankfurter's influential *Religion in Roman Egypt* (1998), which drew extensively on such sources to understand late antique religious transformation and social conflict. However, whether or not the following examples, several of which are taken from hagiographies, contain a historical core is less interesting in this context than their use of column monuments to signify the dangers of idolatry and the function of this theme in particular texts.

Although many hagiographies spend relatively little time describing specific examples of pagan statues, which are often simply referred to as idols without any further clarification, others go into more detail and give a sense of the specific types of sculpture that came under attack by Christian groups or individuals. Examples of this can be found in the hagiography of St Martin of Tours (c. 316–397), authored by his contemporary Sulpicius Severus (Stancliffe 1983). The *Life* and *Dialogues* demonstrate widespread Christian hostility towards paganism in the late 4th century, an attitude that diverges significantly from that of another contemporary author, Ausonius of Bordeaux, who demonstrates a much more conciliatory tone towards pagan images in his texts (Stirling 2005, 155–56). In one episode in the *Dialogues*, St Martin encountered an idol placed on an enormous column, which has been interpreted as one of the characteristic Jupiter columns mentioned above (3.9.1–2). His weapon of choice in attacking this idol was prayer, which was ultimately answered with a thunderbolt from the sky, pulverising the statue. This use of prayer is in fact a trope that is found in many such accounts. In another episode, also related in the *Dialogues*, an idol temple was destroyed by a storm after a night of prayers on behalf of St Martin (3.8.4–7). In this case, the idol also seems to have been placed on a high column above the temple itself. Both cases of iconoclasm are linked to instances of divine intervention (lightning and storm) and the performance of miracles (through prayer), emphasising St Martin's particular status as a holy man, and they are thus well-suited for a hagiographic account that aims to glorify its protagonist. Both also use column monuments to signify idolatrous behaviour in a way that may have been based on observations of contemporary modes of worship, but which furthermore constitutes a heavy stereotyping of pagan practices.

The situation was quite different when Gregory of Tours in the 6th century wrote about statues of Mars and Mercury standing on a tall column at Brioude in the Auvergne, where the tomb of St Julian was becoming the centre of an emerging saint's cult (*The Suffering and Miracles of the Martyr St Julian*, 5.5, and see Greenhalgh 1989, 204).¹ Gregory was trying to promote this cult by compiling stories of the 4th-century martyr at a distance of some 200 years, a fact that of course should make us very cautious about the historical accuracy of the text. He included stories of the martyr's tribulations, decapitation and the miraculous preservation of his head that was a prized relic and believed to have healing powers. The *Life* also preserves a story of a confrontation between a pagan and a recent convert to Christianity; the presence of statues on columns underlines the identification of the shrine as an idol temple, a function that this type of monument increasingly comes to perform in Christian contexts. The size of the column thus amplified the error of paganism. Furthermore, the moral of Gregory's narrative is that the pagan gods were unable to protect their worshippers from harm, in contrast to the powerful St Julian who saved the story's Christian protagonist. At this stage, pagan statues on columns could thus be used simply as shorthand for idolatry and formed part of a larger *topos* related to the creation of Brioude's Christian community. Most revealing is the fact that this story is followed by a description of how the local pagans converted to Christianity after a priest had dreamt that their idols were ground to dust by the power of the name of God (5.6). After their baptism, the pagans themselves proceeded to smash their idols and threw them into a nearby lake and river, a procedure that resonates with several other examples of such accounts.²

In the 7th-century hagiography of St Alypius, we encounter a funerary column with an image of a strange animal (ταυρολέων, half bull and half lion) that was displayed on top of a funerary column (*Acta Alypii stylitae prior*, 9.1–5, 16–26, ed. Delehaye). The location of this encounter was a necropolis outside Adrianopolis in Paphlagonia (Saradi-Mendelovici 1990, 55; Saradi 2008, 131–32). This represented a liminal place to the saint – equivalent of going into the desert to be tempted by the devil – as it was the habitat of pagan demons. It thus constituted an element of danger and a challenge for the saint to overcome, something which the strange nature of the beast adds additional strength to. It furthermore constituted a good narrative frame to emphasise Alypius' achievements, and the column monument should be seen in this context. According to one version of this story, Alypius replaced the idol with a cross and an icon of Christ; he later built a church on the spot. Here, a pagan column monument represents a potential danger that demanded Christian action and

ultimate removal. The placement of the idol on a column again seems to be significant as a signifier of idolatry, and the theme here finds its way into the foundation story of a saint's church and his cult, as in the example from Brioude. The *topos* of pagan statues on columns could at this point be employed in increasingly elaborate variations to add different aspects to a narrative.

This becomes even more evident when we turn to the early 8th century, from which we have the enigmatic and colourful *Parastaseis Syntomoi Chronikai* that is rich in references to pagan statuary in the cityscape of Constantinople (James 1996; Anderson 2011). Several of these statues are described as being placed on columns. In one case, in a passage that appears to be based on a first-hand experience of the author of the text, such a statue in the Kynegion neighbourhood falls from a great height (and thus presumably from a column) and kills a man (28). The statue is described and identified as a portrait (and thus principally not of a cultic nature), but it is still considered to be dangerous and potentially lethal. The height of the column on which the portrait was displayed adds to this sense of demonic danger. The subsequent response is different from the previously discussed examples as the statue was buried, a form of treatment that in fact is quite characteristic of the *Parastaseis* in general. In this case, we can be fairly certain that the statues described in the text were part of the contemporary cityscape and as such not simply literary creations. The *Parastaseis* shows the fascinating modes in which column monuments could be employed in narratives that emphasised difference and disjuncture between a pagan past and a Christian present, although pagan statues could also be understood in very different ways in the cityscape of Constantinople (Mango 1963; Bassett 2004).

This brief and consequently slightly idiosyncratic overview of some examples of the employment of pagan column monuments in Christian textual narratives has highlighted the theme's chronological endurance from the 5th to the 8th centuries, and many other cases could have been chosen for discussion. Yet the discussed examples demonstrate the wide appeal of the theme and how it could be employed in different contexts, sometimes for quite different purposes, but always with a view to the reader's construction of idolatry.

Christian images of pagan column monuments

In spite of the common appearance of the Christian destruction of pagan statues in 4th-century texts, contemporary visual representations of the theme are very rare, and their interpretation is rarely uncontroversial. In fact only one example is known: a simple

dipinto in a hypogeum on Via Paisiello in Rome, which forms part of a larger series of biblical scenes, including Jonah, Noah, Moses, and the raising of Lazarus (Stewart 1999, 173–75; Sauer 2003, 67–69). Seen in the context of this overarching biblical framework, it is perhaps less likely that the scene is to be considered historical in our sense. It is indeed depicted right next to a scene showing the three Hebrews in the fiery furnace, thus making an iconographic link between two narratives of idolatry, and as such it is unlikely to refer to a specific contemporary episode of statue destruction. On the other hand, one of the protagonists in this scene is depicted as throwing stones at the statue, which may refer to the kinds of social tension that could be observed in contemporary statue riots (although these were, of course, far from always of a religious character). In any case, the statue in question is not a column monument, but is likely to represent an imperial statue or, alternatively, a cult image of Jupiter.



Fig. 14.2. Christian sarcophagus showing the idol worship of Nebuchadnezzar, Syracuse

What we do see as early as the 4th century, however, are depictions of pagan column monuments in Christian contexts, specifically when illustrating biblical narratives, such as the story of Nebuchadnezzar dedicating a colossal idol in the *Book of Daniel*. Several different genres depict such scenes, sometimes including depictions of the idol, although this was not always required. The story is well-known from the decoration of Christian sarcophagus reliefs on which the golden image of Nebuchadnezzar is also occasionally represented as sitting on a column-like base, such as in an example in Milan (Dresken-Weiland 1998, 56–58, no. 150).³ To fit into the narrative registers of the lid or the coffin itself, Nebuchadnezzar's idol is usually depicted as a life-size portrait bust of the king, rather than as a colossal free-standing image, as described in the Bible. A spectacular example of this motif in the Museo Archeologico Regionale P. Orsi in Syracuse depicts the portrait bust as placed on a spiral column with a composite capital, which is not the typical choice for a statue base (Fig. 14.2; Dresken-Weiland 1998, 8–10, no. 20). In both cases, the column sets the image apart from other parts of the figurative decoration and marks it as an idol. In this context column monuments clearly served as props primarily, signifying idolatry in a miraculous narrative that was meant to highlight the deliverance of the three Hebrews, an aspect of the iconography that in a metaphorical sense was particularly suitable for the decoration of a coffin.

Pagan column monuments are also known from a variety of other Christian visual media, such as illustrated manuscripts as well as fresco and mosaic decorations in churches. Many of the following examples are considerably younger than the previously mentioned sarcophagi, but they give a sense of the variety of visual media which this particular *topos* found its way into.

In medieval manuscripts, naked statues on columns frequently served as signifiers of idolatry (Camille 1989, 87–101, 120–28). In the illustrated manuscript of Gregory of Nazianzus's writings (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Gr. 510 f 440r; on this manuscript, see Brubaker 1985), dated to 879–883, the last pagan emperor Julian is depicted in a scene of sacrifice. To the right is shown a large, semi-circular monument (possibly to be identified as an altar) with a full-scale statue on top, flanked by two bust-size statues. This particular type of monument (sometimes with an added portico) is used in other manuscripts to suggest a palatial setting, for example in the Vienna Genesis (pict. 31, see Weitzmann 1977, pl. 26), and generally adds a sense of depth to the background. The scene illustrates a sermon attacking Julian, and the two elements of text and image thus come

together to signify his identity as an apostate. It represents a visual construction of pagan idolatry, similar to other scenes discussed here.

The Menologium of Basil II, dated to the 10th or early 11th century and now in the Vatican Library, includes several pagan statues, often depicted as nudes and placed on columns (Ševčenko 1962). As a liturgical collection of the lives of saints, it also illustrates notable scenes from their careers. In one case, a saint is seen next to two naked statues that appear to be falling from columns, crushing two people that lie under the rubble of a collapsing idol temple (Fig. 14.3). This testifies to the potential dangers inherent in such images, which accounts for their frequent appearance in hagiographic accounts of iconoclasm. Next to the scene of falling idols is a representation of a saint's tomb. Cyril Mango suggests that the Byzantine illustrators of this manuscript may in this case have been inspired by the statue of Constantine-Helios on the porphyry column in Constantinople (Mango 1963, 73–74).

An 11th-century illustrated manuscript once in Izmir, but now lost, shows the worship of an image on a pillar (Strzygowski 1899, Taf. 19). F. A. Bauer and C. Witschel (2007, Abb. 4) have suggested that the producer of the image may have been inspired by the statue of Athena in the Forum of Constantine in Constantinople. The aim here is not to show an act of iconoclasm, but rather to represent a generic scene of idolatrous behaviour that once again employs what was now clearly a common *topos* of idolatry. Another scene from the same manuscript shows further idols on top of columns in the Temple of Jupiter Heliopolitanus at Baalbek (Fig. 14.4).



Fig. 14.3. Scene from the *Menologium of Basil II* showing falling statues (after Sevčenko 1962, fig. 4).

The 12th-century Madrid Skylitzes illustrates a scene of two men on ladders attacking a statue on a column with hammers, encouraged by a nearby standing patriarch (Mango 1963, 61; Fig. 14.1). The scene refers to an episode in the second quarter of the 9th century, evidently designed to prevent a barbarian invasion in Constantinople. It thus matches some of the attitudes towards pagan idols that can be observed in the *Parastaseis*. What is interesting in this context is the representation of such idols on columns, which must have matched the expectations of readers and viewers of this episode.

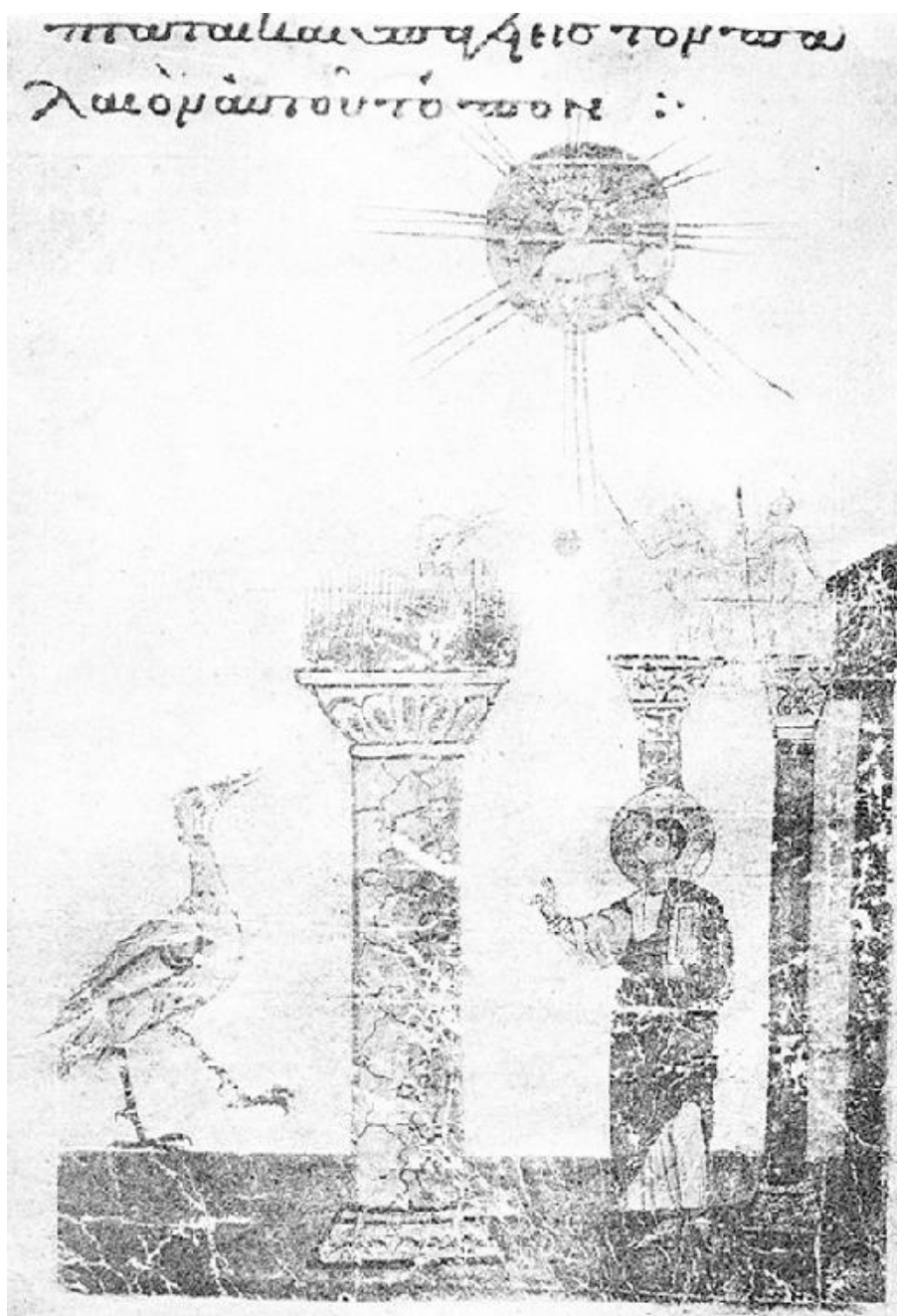


Fig. 14.4. Scene from an 11th-century manuscript once in Izmir showing idol worship in the Temple of Jupiter Heliopolitanus at Baalbek (after Strzygowski 1899, Taf. IV).

An English manuscript dating from the 13th century and known as the Trinity College Apocalypse after its current home depicts St John Chrysostom as the destroyer of the temple and statue of the Ephesian Artemis (folio 29 verso, see Brieger 1967, 54; Camille 1989, 110–11;

McKitterick *et al.* 2005). In this case, the statue of Artemis looks more like a medieval maiden than the patron goddess of Ephesos, and while we are clearly getting further and further away from any knowledge of what Classical sculpture actually looked like, the motif remained in use. Artemis is placed high on a column, highlighting the character of her shrine as an idol temple, and her skin is dark, signifying her demonic nature. This gives us an example of an artist who certainly felt most at home with textual descriptions of idol temples and who suitably flags John's rhetoric as his primary weapon in the fight against idolatry. The contemporary *Aurea Legenda*, written by Jacobus de Voragine, informs us of how he reduced the statue of Artemis to dust through prayer. Several manuscripts illustrating this important collection of saints' lives also depict idols that are placed on tall columns (Camille 1989, 120–22).

Interestingly, the theme of pagan statues on columns also finds its way into literary genres, for example, in manuscripts that illustrate Homeric scenes, such as those that accompanied versions of Benoît de Sainte-Maure's *Roman de Troie*, written about 1160–1170 and subsequently very popular in Western Europe. In one manuscript, now in Madrid, the marriage of Paris and Helen is depicted in a setting that features no less than three nude or semi-nude statues on top of tall columns (Buchthal 1971, pl. 31c). In another scene from the same manuscript, a temple is represented with a colossal column idol in the middle (Buchthal 1971, pl. 53a). Among this material we also find particular oddities, such as a naked pagan idol that is placed on top of a very Christian-looking altar inside a building that is meant to convey the Temple of Venus on Kythera where Paris and Helen first met (Buchthal 1971, pl. 50e). Clearly this period witnessed a wide range of representations of idols that were continuously reshaped by contemporary expectations.

Representations of saints were popular motifs in medieval churches and given the theme's frequent appearance in hagiography, it is not surprising to see examples of iconoclasm that include pagan column monuments in this medium. Recently restored frescoes, dated by means of an inscription to 1259, in the St Nicholas church in Boyana, today a suburb of Sofia, represent 18 different scenes from the life of St Nicholas, including one where he instructs two men to respectively strike (with an axe?) and pull down a nude statue of the goddess Venus that stands on a small pillar (Fig. 14.5; and see Tsonev 1957; Miyatev 1961; Camille 1989, 105). As part of this grander narrative of the life of the saint, which depicts biographical scenes as well as miracles performed by him, the image demonstrates well how the destruction of idols was an activity that was expected of saints. The frescoes depicting St Nicholas are placed in the narthex and thus

played a key role for worshippers in establishing the identity and achievements of the church's patron saint. This scene also stands out in the way that it highlights direct, human agency in an act of iconoclasm.

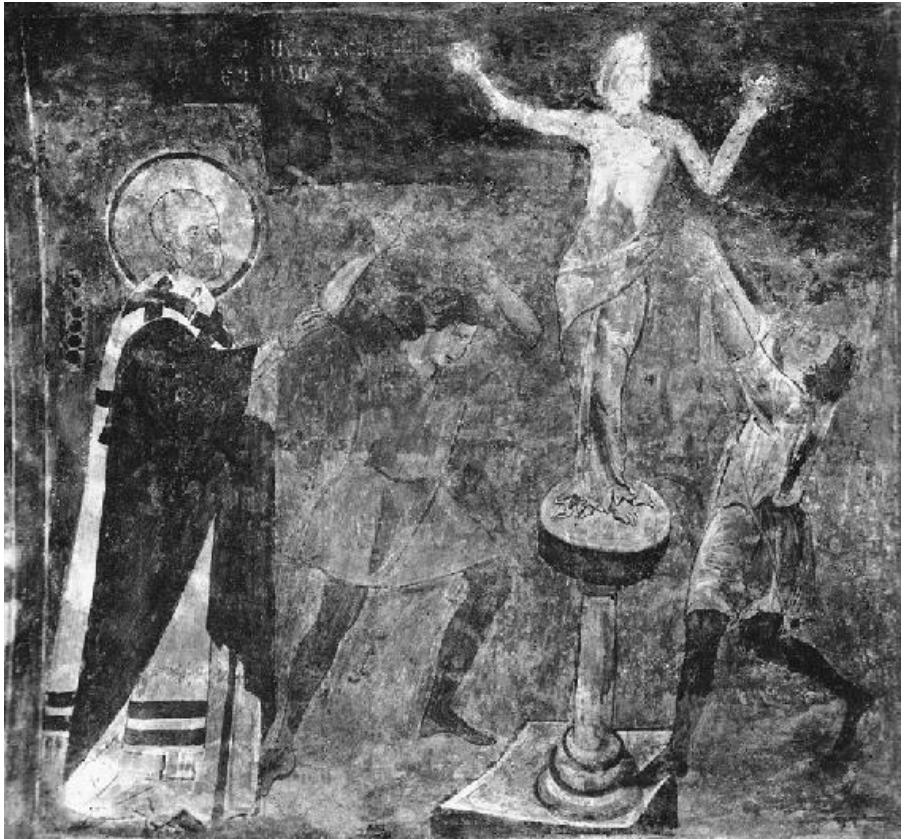


Fig. 14.5. *St Nicholas instructing an attack on a statue of Venus, Church of St Nicholas, Boyana (after Miyatev 1961, pl. 58).*

The mosaics in St Mark's Basilica in Venice, dating from the early 13th century, but much restored and updated over the years, also represent several scenes of Christian destruction that prominently feature column monuments (Demus 1988, 79–85; Gramaccini 1996, 30, Abb. 3–4; Sauer 2003, 65–67). They are found in the south aisle of the church, where they are part of a cycle of the lives of apostles and martyrs, a very similar context to those at Boyana and what we saw in manuscripts. Considering that Byzantine artists were active in the decoration of the church, it is not surprising to see such a connection to eastern *topoi* of idolatry. In fact, Otto Demus in his monumental publication of the church's mosaics, notes that the inspiration for the mosaics depicting apostles here “was not an Acts source but must have

illustrated a menologion or synaxarion ... based on apocryphal sources, or else illustrations of a specific collection of apostles' legends" (1988, 80). The scenes are explained in large inscriptions that give the names of the most important protagonists and places involved in the narrative. In one scene, the apostle Philip instructs a group of men to pull down a semi-nude statue of Mars from a tall column (Demus 1984, pl. 8). Flying in the air next to the statue, and apparently trying to keep it standing, is a dragon, again symbolising the inherent dangers of the idol.

The mosaics in St Mark's Basilica also include scenes representing Simon overthrowing an image of the Persian sun god on a chariot (glossed as *Stata Solis*), again placed on a column (Demus 1984, pl. 373). The antagonist is shown as a black-winged demon that appears to hold on to the pagan idol, trying to save it from destruction. Jude is seen in an accompanying scene, pointing to an image of the Persian moon god (*Stata Lune*) with a characteristic moon symbol on her head, also in a chariot and placed on a column (Demus 1984, pl. 374). Again, a semi-nude black demon tries to save the idol. The two images mirror each other very closely. The martyrdoms of Simon and Jude are thus linked, textually, iconographically and by their architectural placement in the church.

Finally, St Mark is also seen in a scene of an idol falling from a column that forms part of the 12th-century decoration of the basilica's Pala d'Oro (Caseau 2001, fig. 16/2; Hahnloser and Polacco 1994, 35, tav. 38). This scene takes place within an urban setting (signified by the presence of a city wall) and is clearly labelled "The Blessed Mark destroys an idol" (*Destruit ydolum beatus Marcus*). Similar to the mosaic representations, the idol, which is not naked, but is wearing military clothing as well as a shield and helmet and is thus perhaps to be identified as Athena, is represented entirely in black, indicating her demonic character.

Conclusions

This paper has compiled a range of textual and visual representations of column monuments and approached them as a common *topos* employed in a variety of contexts to signify idolatry, the worship of idols. Although the examples discussed belong to chronologically and geographically diverse settings, they are consistently found in similar contexts, particularly in hagiographies and illustrations hereof. Some of the represented examples may take their inspiration from actual statues still standing in the cityscape, such as those in Constantinople. This city's statue columns, the column of Constantine in particular,

could have played an important role in perpetuating the image, although many of the examples discussed do not show any direct similarity with this particular monument. Others are more clearly fictional creations, imagined and represented by their authors and illustrators. In that way, this *topos* is not unique, and it can be very difficult to assess the relationship of individual examples to a given historical reality. Yet they still give us useful pieces to work with when trying to understand late antique and medieval Christian constructions of idolatry. It is, for example, interesting to note that this *topos* developed at a time when columns, paradoxically, but also typically of early Christianity, came to have a very different significance in the eastern Christian tradition of *stylites*, ascetic saints who spent large parts of their lives on columns, which later turned into major pilgrimage sites in their own right (Schachner 2010). In that sense, pagan column monuments could perhaps also be understood as intra-Christian theological critique of contemporary practices, although the evidence does not demonstrate this in any definite way. Elevation on top of a column could on the other hand also have more positive connotations in Christian usage (Camille 1989, 200–2).

Why did the theme of idols on columns have such endurance? One answer could be that the artists simply represented what they knew, but this is not enough to explain the careful and repeated use of the theme in the sometimes rather complex narratives that make up late antique hagiographies and other genres. There was clearly as much rhetoric to this construction as reality, and it can be difficult to distinguish between the two in our interpretations. It seems likely that the *topos* became so widespread because it was a very effective method of communicating notions of idolatry to Christian readers and viewers. It gave them a simple way of identifying pagan cult statues which could in fact be rather difficult to pin down and stereotyped in the way that its opponents desired through texts and images. It can even be said to have served as a shorthand for at least two of the three important ways of distinguishing a cult image that have recently been defined by Joannis Mylonopoulos (2010, 6–12): first, its position in a temple (signified by the column), and second, its standardised appearance (placed on a column and often nude).

From the perspective of Christian readers and viewers, the theme developed from the question of how to visually construct idolatry, apparent already in the case of the Nebuchadnezzar sarcophagus. There was a need to emphasise that the images in question were idols – in contrast to the representations of holy men and biblical figures – and placing them on a visually imposing feature, such as a column, made that reading possible. In that way, column monuments were

rendered readable as idols by viewers. This would have been especially important in monumental artwork, such as the mosaic decoration of St Mark's Basilica, where readers physically would be placed at a considerable distance from the images. In that case, large-scale inscriptions also guide particular readings of the decoration on the walls of the church and point to the idolatrous behaviour of the antagonists. This rhetorical device of constructing idolatry has a long history, which I have uncovered small fragments of here. Its history does not end here, though. For example, when Nicholas Poussin painted his masterpiece *Dance Round the Golden Calf* (c. 1635), he depicted the calf on a tall podium, in this way directly emphasising its function as an idol and thus forcing its viewers to pay close attention to this central aspect of his painted narrative, namely idolatry in all its force.

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1 “Not far away from the shrine that this woman constructed over the tomb of the martyr was a huge sanctuary in which people worshiped an image an image of Mars and Mercury [set] on a very high column” (trans. Van Dam 1993, 167).

2 E.g. Besa, *Life of Shenoute*, 126. The practice of immersing ritually charged objects into water has a very long history, cf. Merrifield 1987, 97–101; Croxford 2003; Aldhouse-Green 2004, 24, 100.

3 Another example in Boville Ernica (portrait bust on a fluted column): Dresken-Weiland 1998, 20–21, no. 63. A further example, dated to the last quarter of the 4th century, is known today only in fragments (Deichmann 1967, 24–26, no. 28).

THE ENCYCLOPAEDIC ILLUSTRATION OF A NEW EMPIRE: GRAECO-ROMAN- BYZANTINE AND SASANIAN MODELS ON THE FAÇADE OF QASR AL-MSHATTA

Katharina Meinecke

When considering the architectural decoration of the early Islamic desert castle Qasr al-Mshatta in Jordan, it is striking how close to Graeco-Roman artwork large parts of the ornaments appear. The façade is adorned with grape vines populated by birds and animals, there are friezes composed of acanthus leaves or bead-and-real, and the door is framed by vine scrolls growing from amphorae. A closer look reveals though that the decoration does not exactly follow antique models. Rather the ornaments are composed of different elements and iconographic motifs, not all derived from Graeco-Roman or Byzantine sources. In between the classical motifs, some Sasanian models can be identified – a mix which is characteristic for early Islamic art. The architectural decoration of the façade of Mshatta, which is currently being studied within an extensive research project in Berlin by the Technische Universität and the Museum of Islamic Art, provides an excellent example to enhance the study of the formation of early Islamic art and the intentions of its patrons, e.g. the Umayyad rulers.

Qasr al-Mshatta is situated approximately 30 km south of the Jordanian capital Amman. Its façade was brought to Berlin in the course of the construction of the Hedjaz Railway in 1903–4 as a present from the Ottoman Sultan Abdul Hamid II to the German Kaiser Wilhelm II (Enderlein and Meinecke 1992). The palace belongs to a series of multi-functional, temporary residential buildings erected in the Levant, in desert and adjacent semi-arid areas, by the Umayyad dynasty in the 7th and 8th century. No inscriptions were found that

could give a date for its construction. Yet the building type, its geographical location, and the stylistic analysis of the architectural ornaments, as well as recent mortar analyses all point to a likely date in the mid-8th century (for the prevailing attribution to al-Walid II, see below). Of the so-called desert castles Mshatta is one of the largest in size covering an area of 144 m × 144 m (Fig. 15.1). A wall constructed of shell-filled limestone with 23 semicircular towers surrounds the palace area and gives it the outward appearance of a late antique fortified border *castrum*. The building's only gate in the centre of the south-western wall is accentuated by two flanking towers with semi-octagonal plan. Internally the construction was never completed, and only few structures were erected along the building's central axis. Several rooms were built around the entrance, among them a mosque identifiable by a prayer niche. A group of rooms that most likely had palatial or representative functions was erected against the structure's north-eastern wall. A triple-apsed hall, possibly a throne room, forms its centre. It is preceded by a courtyard with arcades made of Roman spolia, green stone columns, at least one Corinthian capital of Proconnesian marble from the late 2nd century, and one marble column base. In between this representational quarter and the entrance rooms lies a large open courtyard. The broad eastern and western wings of the palace, probably originally meant to contain residential quarters, were left empty.

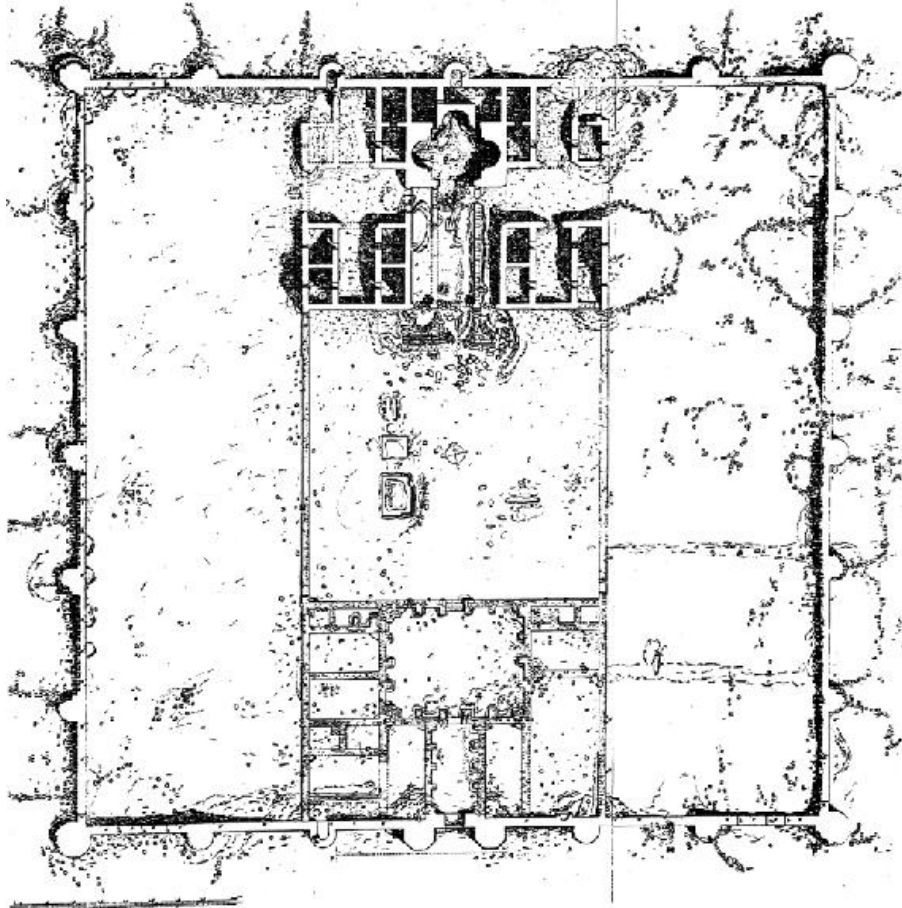


Fig. 15.1. Ground plan of Mshatta, as excavated by B. Schulz in 1903 (from B. Schulz (1904) *Mschatta. Bericht über die Aufnahme der Ruine. Jahrbuch der Königlich Preussischen Kunstsammlungen* 25, pl. 1).

Apart from several sculptured capitals and archivolts in the representational quarter, the most abundant architectural decoration is found on the façade (Fig. 15.2). Only the two semi-octagonal towers and the enclosure wall surrounding the entrance gate up to the respective flanking semi-circular towers to the right and left were decorated. Within this segment, the bottom part of the wall is shaped as a base with a central torus and further strongly protruding profiles, each moulding covered with a decorative frieze of vine scrolls, stylized acanthus leaves, or other antique motifs. Above this base, a cyma decorated with large acanthus leaves in the style of classical Corinthian capitals runs up and down in a zigzag fashion between the upper rim of the base and the top of the wall. On the top and the sides, the entire wall segment is surrounded by a final cornice with a medallion scroll frieze, accompanied by further, more repetitive

ornaments.

The zigzag cyma creates ten upright and ten inverted triangles on both sides of the entrance gate. In addition, the door is framed by two half upright triangles, and half an inverted triangle terminates the decoration on both outer edges. A large protruding six-lobed rosette with a rim of acanthus leaves is set in the centre of each upright triangle, and a similarly styled octagon in each inverted triangle.

The surface of the wall within the triangles is covered by a flat, but dense relief resembling a tapestry adorned with intertwined vegetal tendrils. Even though the carving, like the building itself, was never completed, and many sections of the wall remained undecorated, it is evident from the executed parts that the façade was meant to be completely covered with ornaments. The prevailing elements within the triangles are grape vines. On the left half of the façade, including the wall section immediately to the right of the gate, they are populated with birds, animals, mythological creatures, and even some human figures (Figs. 15.3, 15.5–6, and 15.8), while on the right half of the façade, living creatures are completely absent (Figs. 15.4 and 15.7). In previous research, this absence of living things has been explained as a pious consideration of the mosque situated behind this side of the façade (Enderlein and Meinecke 1992, 156; Talgam 2004, 14). The scrolls on the right half of the façade are much denser than the grape vines on the left half, and several are made up of a myriad of miniature elements (Fig. 15.7). This marks a shift in the overall layout of the decoration, which goes beyond the mere absence of living beings. Furthermore, the mosque is not even the neighbour of the entire right half of the façade, making a different explanation for the lack of living creatures at least worth considering.¹



Fig. 15.2. The façade of Qasr al-Mshatta in situ before 1903 (Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Museum für Islamische Kunst, Fotoarchiv).

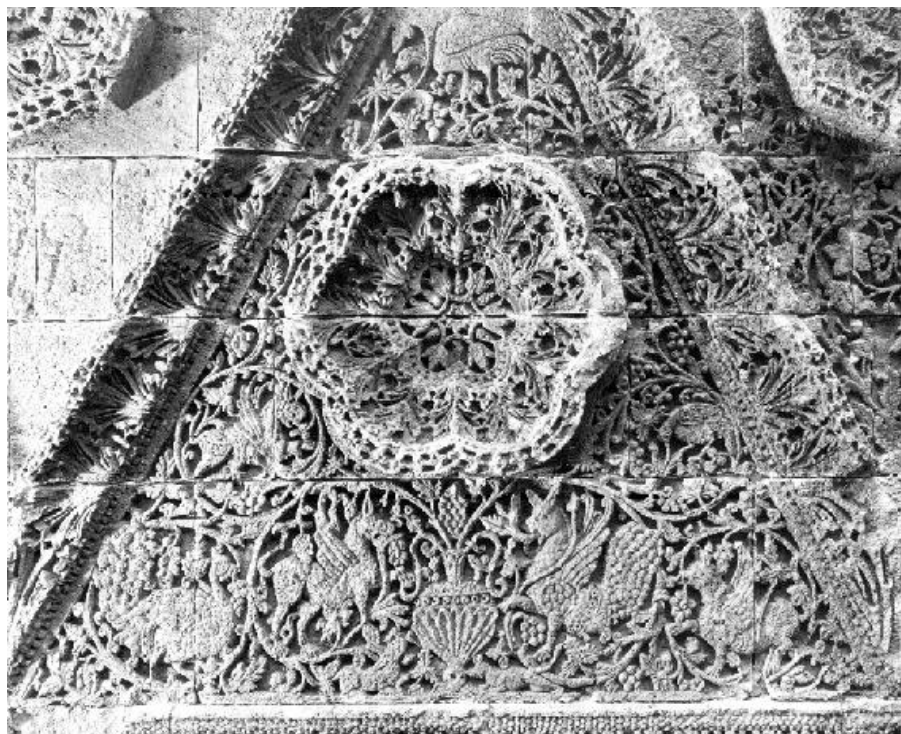


Fig. 15.3. Fourth triangle from the left with *senmurv* and griffin in the centre (triangle D) (Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Museum für Islamische Kunst, Fotoarchiv).

On the left half of the façade, five triangles are decorated with two grape vines growing in circles from a central element, a vessel or acanthus plant flanked by two heraldically positioned animals (Fig. 15.3). The model for this kind of design is obvious, as it finds its closest analogies in the peopled scrolls on Roman and late antique mosaics, architectural friezes, and minor arts around the Mediterranean. In the Middle East, the artistic tradition of the inhabited scroll was particularly rich in Late Antiquity, and the motif was used on innumerable mosaic pavements in churches, tombs, and residential sites. Especially in the Palestinian and Jordanian region, in the proximity of Mshatta, mosaic workshops were still active well into the 8th century, as the significant mosaic pavement of the Church of St Stephen at Umm ar-Rasas exemplifies. It features an inhabited vine scroll growing in circles from an acanthus plant, which is flanked by peacocks lead by little boys. All in all, the tendrils create eleven equal rows of four circles each (Piccirillo 1993, 219, 238–39). The way in which the scrolls grow and develop is canonical on most late antique mosaics. At Mshatta, the grape vines grow from the central vessel in exactly the same pattern, as becomes particularly evident from the comparison with smaller mosaic pavements, such as two square floor

mosaics from the 6th century found near Hama (Donceel-Voûte 1988, 16–9) and Frikya (Strube 1996, 55–6) in Syria. On the mosaic from Hama, two grape vines emerge from an amphora flanked by two peacocks. Both vine tendrils grow downward creating loops that enclose the peacocks. On the outer rim of each loop, an offshoot grows from the tendril and continues upward to create another circle surrounding a bird. On the top of each of the first two central loops, another branch grows upward and rolls inward creating a second row of scrolls; each loop in this second row encloses a bird. The layout of the scrolls at Mshatta is identical; the only variation is caused by the rosette in the centre of the triangle, which prevents the two central loops in the second row from meeting in the middle. Furthermore, the development of the grape vine is inevitably limited to this formation of two rows of scrolls due to the lack of space, while it usually continues on the mosaics.

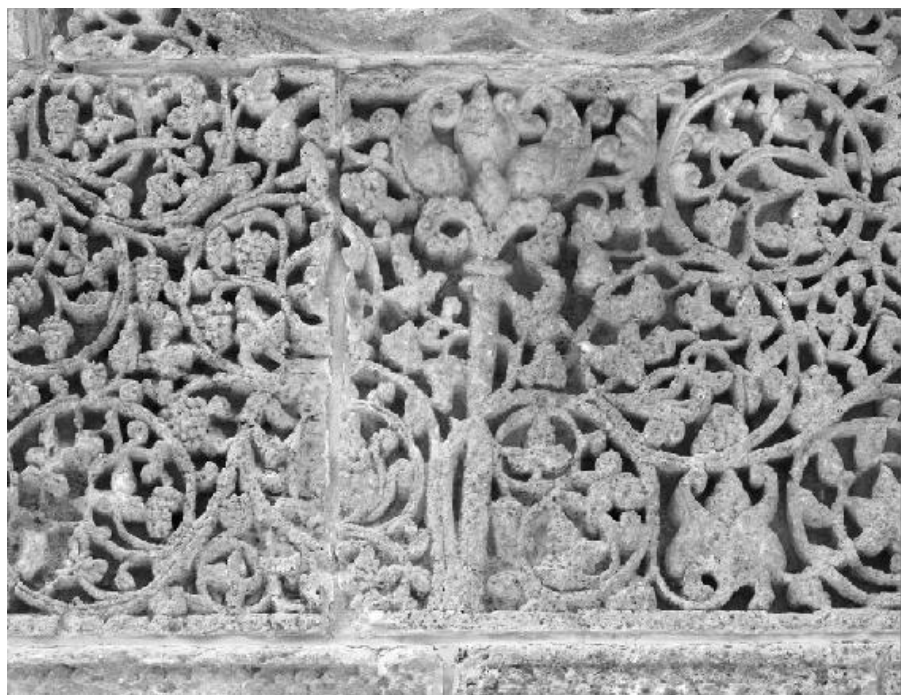


Fig. 15.4. Detail of the third triangle on the right of the entrance gate with central winged palmette attached to a pole (triangle O) (photo: Katharina Meinecke).

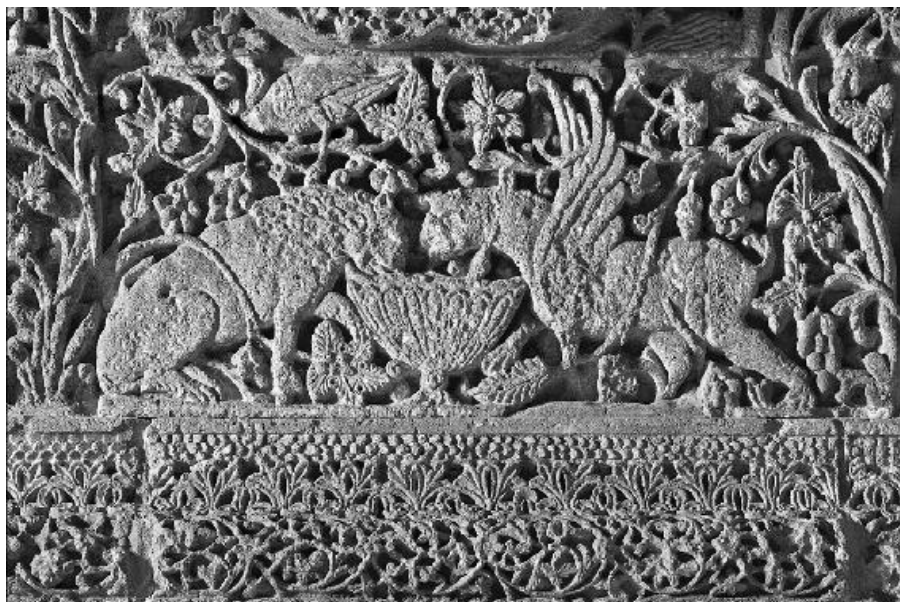


Fig. 15.5. Detail of the second triangle on the left of the entrance with a lion and a winged lion drinking from the central bowl (triangle I) (Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Museum für Islamische Kunst, Fotoarchiv, photo: Johannes Kramer).

On the Mshatta façade, this design prevalently used as a floor decoration is transposed onto a wall. This distribution of decoration is decisively not Graeco-Roman. The excessive use of ornaments that cover both the complete surface of the wall and the structural elements such as the basis, cornices, and rosettes, differs distinctly from the common practice in Graeco-Roman architectural decoration, which is applied mostly along the load-bearing members. Such tapestries of ornaments were readily used in Umayyad architecture though, on the façades of other desert castles such as Qasr al-Hayr al-Gharbi or the bath porch at Khirbat al-Mafjar. In both cases, the reliefs are carved in stucco instead of stone; in the extensive use of stone reliefs, Mshatta stands alone. In Qasr al-Hayr al-Gharbi, the stucco reliefs cover the façade including the two towers flanking the gate as at Mshatta. Although the decoration of both Qasr al-Hayr al-Gharbi and Khirbat al-Mafjar is composed of vegetal and geometric ornaments, animals, and human figures like on the Mshatta façade, the choice of ornaments and their distribution are much more repetitive, even further remote from Graeco-Roman architectural principles and much closer to Sasanian stucco decoration (Hamilton 1953; for Qasr al-Hayr, see Schlumberger 1986 and Bakour 2008, 287–88; for Khirbat al-Mafjar, see Hamilton 1959, 172–83, pl. 107). They might even reflect mosaic pavements composed of a patch-work of abstract designs like in the bath of Khirbet al-Mafjar, projected on

the wall in a similar process as at Mshatta (on Khirbet al-Mafjar, see Ettinghausen *et al.* 2001, 42, fig. 46). On the Mshatta façade, the non-antique impression is further emphasized by the zigzag cyma that, although featuring a very classical acanthus frieze, finds no parallels in Graeco-Roman architecture. It continues the tradition of the decorative string course mouldings applied as structuring elements on the façades of late antique buildings in Northern Syria, yet goes far beyond.

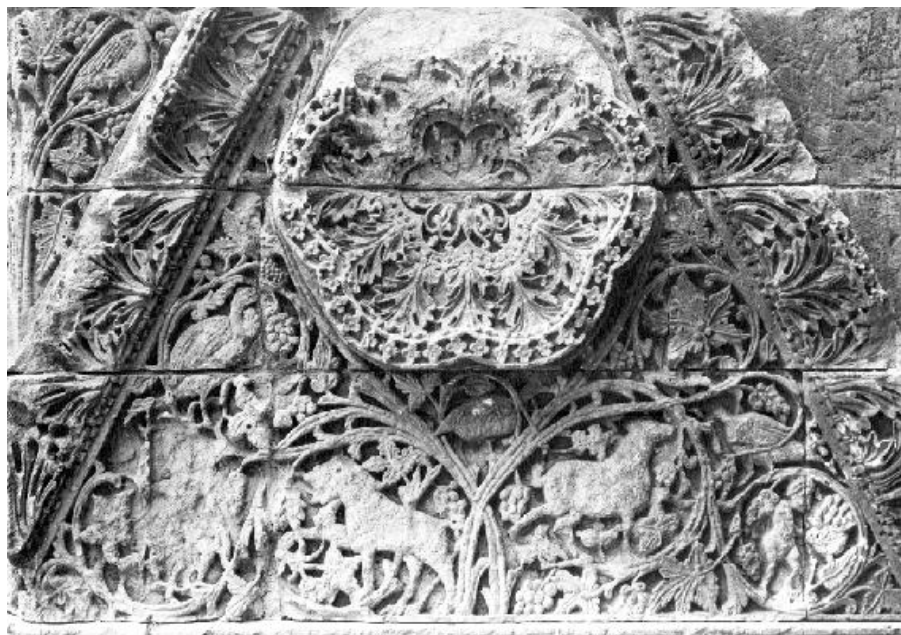


Fig. 15.6. First triangle on the right of the gate with vintage scenes (triangle J) (Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Museum für Islamische Kunst, Fotoarchiv).

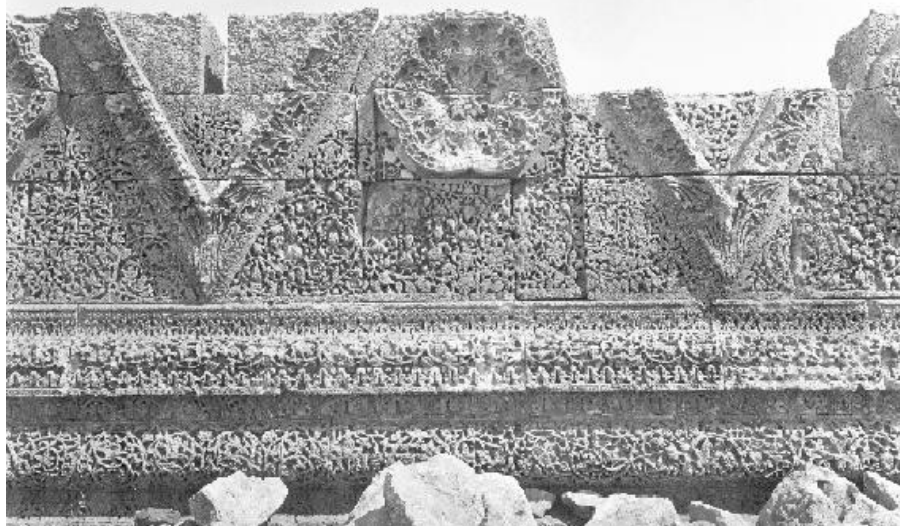


Fig. 15.7. Second to last triangle on the right half of the façade (triangle U), with neighbouring triangles T and V (Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Museum für Islamische Kunst, Fotoarchiv; probably photographed by B. Schulz in 1903, before the façade was dismantled and brought to Berlin).

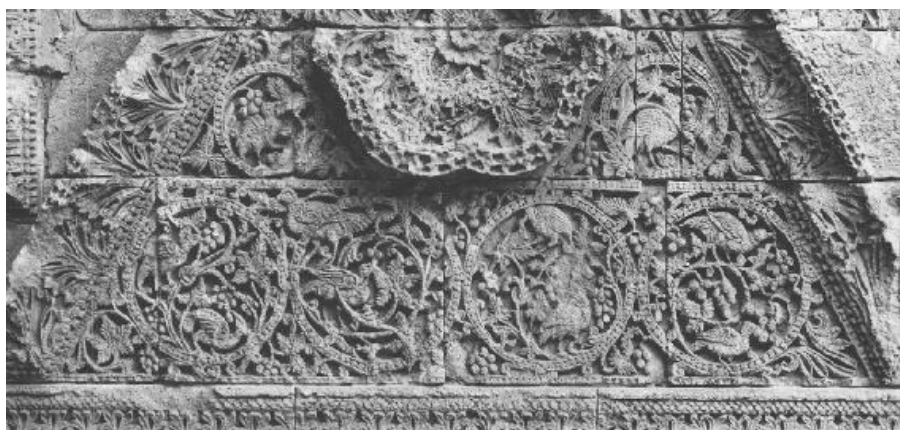


Fig. 15.8. First triangle on the left half of the façade (triangle A) (Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Museum für Islamische Kunst, Fotoarchiv).

Similarly, the vine scrolls covering the wall are not exact copies of the late antique forerunners. The tendrils of the grape vines are not uniform in their physiognomy, but are instead composed of leaves and grape clusters in innumerable different shapes that vary even within one triangle and along one tendril. The single shapes reoccur in the triangles on both halves of the façade, as well as in the friezes on the base and final cornice. One prominent element is vine leaves with three or more single grapes placed at the point of junction with the stalk (Fig. 15.5). As K. Creswell already pointed out, the best

comparisons for this shape of leaves is found in late antique Egyptian ivory and wood carvings, where it is a frequent component of inhabited scrolls (Creswell 1939, 34–6). Grapes with peculiar triangular incisions, again found on both halves of the Mshatta façade and on the base, might originate from the same cultural background, as they are found on the fragment of a carved ivory in the Egyptian Museum in Cairo (Creswell 1939, pl. 4a). Other shapes of grape clusters, for example with a central grape growing directly from the stalk, seem to originate from architectural ornaments from the Roman Imperial Age instead and are attested, for example, on the reused Roman door frame in the façade of Qasr al-Hayr al-Gharbi, now in the National Museum of Damascus (Schlumberger 1986, pl. 55d).

The birds, animals, and human figures that populated the western half of the façade spring from different iconographic traditions as well. The two human figures in the last triangle on the left semi-octagonal tower, for example, seem a remnant of the vintage scenes common in Graeco-Roman peopled scrolls (Fig. 15.6). One of them, a chubby putto carrying a basket of fruits, can best be compared to similar figures on late antique Egyptian textiles, such as one example in the Louvre in Paris (Schrenk 1998, fig. 5), which shows two cupids carrying similar large baskets filled with grapes.

Especially some of the mythological creatures introduce an iconographic background that is clearly not Graeco-Roman or Byzantine. The fourth triangle from the left, although featuring the classical design of grape vines growing in circles, shows a beast that consists of the head, torso, and wings of a griffin with a peacock's tail (Fig. 15.3). As has been recognized before, this is evidently a Persian *senmurv*, a creature half dog, half peacock that springs from Zoroastrian mythology (Kröger 1999, 201–3). It lived in the Tree of Life and spread its seeds. *Senmurvs* are attested in Sasanian art at least from the 6th-7th century onwards in rock reliefs, metal ware, textiles, and stucco decoration (Schmidt 2002; Gierlichs 1993, 26–7; Ghirshman 1962, 227–29). Despite the obvious match, the *senmurv* on the Mshatta façade differs distinctly from these late Sasanian depictions in various details of its physiognomy. While the Sasanian *senmurvs*' upper bodies have a more canine aspect, and the lower part of their bodies consists only of the peacock's tale, the *senmurv* on the Mshatta façade is much slimmer, and it seems as if its lower body was simply deprived of the griffin's hind legs and had a different tail added. These characteristics make it rather unlikely that the figure was carved by a Persian artist. Instead representations of a *senmurv* on portable objects of minor art from Persia such as the above mentioned metal ware or textiles, a picture in a pattern book or maybe even a written or oral description of the creature will rather

have served as a model for the stone mason on the site, wherever he came from.

One typically Iranian characteristic of the physiognomy of the senmurv on the Mshatta façade is that its front thigh is covered with a scale decoration. In the Sasanian depictions of winged animals, these scales belong to the upper part of the wing and represent its small plumage in contrast to the long primal feathers.² On the Mshatta façade, this wing design is found on several birds (Fig. 15.6), as well as on the winged lion depicted on the left semi-octagonal tower (Fig. 15.5). The latter can be compared to a very similar winged lion prominently featured on a Sasanian silver plate from the 6th-7th century in the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art in Kansas City (Ghirshman 1962, 219, fig. 261). This suggests that the winged lion at Mshatta, as well as the birds, were probably modelled on Sasanian examples too.

On the right half of the façade that shows no living creatures whatsoever, the reference to Sasanian models become even more frequent. Four upright triangles are still very similar to those on the left half, as they show a central vase or bowl with two grape vines growing from it in more or less symmetrical loops. In the remaining triangles, the vessel is simply replaced by a different central motif from which the tendrils emerge (Fig. 15.4). Unlike the grape vines on the left half of the façade, those on the right half are enriched by peculiar buds, pine cone-like elements, and so-called winged palmettes made up of a split palmette with wings attached to it, topped by a kind of pine cone or sphere (Fig. 15.4). In the second to last triangle on the far right, the tendrils consist exclusively of these elements, while grapes and vine leaves are completely eliminated (Fig. 15.7). Especially for the winged palmettes, the Sasanian origin is evident (Kröger 1999, 193–201). In the Sasanian realm, wings were associated with the victory god Verethragna. Of particular significance for our argument is the pair of wings on the crown of the Sasanian King of Kings as it is depicted on coins, silver plates, and rock reliefs (Ghirshman 1962, 192, 212, 250–51). Like the senmurv, the winged palmettes at Mshatta differ from their Sasanian models, especially as they mostly feature a cone as the final element instead of a recumbent crescent and sphere as on the Shahanshah's crown. The buds and cones on the Mshatta façade were probably also influenced by Sasanian art, where buds and cone-like elements were frequent components of (peopled) scrolls or fantastic plants (see, for example, Erdmann 1969, pl. 9–12, 14 or Harper 1978, 71–3). These elements do not occur in the triangles on the left of the gate, but one almost identical bud is integrated into the vine scrolls on the torus moulding on that half of the façade.

This juxtaposition of elements from different cultural and artistic backgrounds, especially from Graeco-Roman-Byzantine antiquity and the Sasanian realm, is characteristic for early Islamic art from the Umayyad period (see, for example, Talgam 2004). The transfer of forms from other artistic cultures was not completely new in the early Islamic period, since especially Graeco-Roman art proliferated throughout the ancient world and a universal repertoire of images had already developed until this time. Thus characteristic elements such as peopled scrolls or single components of architectural ornaments were common in Byzantine and late antique Egyptian, as well as in Sasanian art, and even further East (Brands 2001, 392; Finster 2001, 374–75). Motifs had not only been transmitted from Graeco-Roman-Byzantine to Parthian-Sasanian art, but also in the opposite direction, even though the latter was less frequent (compare mosaics in Antioch: Ghirshman 1962, 307). The geometric design in the first upright triangle on the far left of the Mshatta façade exemplifies this problem of whether a Graeco-Roman-Byzantine or a Sasanian ornament was the model for a wide-spread motif (Fig. 15.8). The lower part of the triangle contains a geometric design superimposed on the grape vine décor. It consists of two bands, decorated with strings of beads, which are intertwined in such a way that they form four circles, interlaced by small loops, one immediately touching the next. These repetitive circles are a common design in late antique mosaics, for example in the central aisle of the Church of St John the Baptist in Umm Hartayn or in the southern aisle of the church of Mezraa el-Ulia, both in Syria and from the late 5th century (Donceel-Voûte 1988, 178–86, 192–201, especially 194, fig. 169). In Mezraa el-Ulia, the circles are left empty, while in Umm Hartayn each circle is filled with a bird, vase, or other single element against a light background. This arrangement of single figures or small groups against a plain background in interlinked medallions is also found on late antique Egyptian textiles (see, for example, Stauffer 1992, 186–88, no. 8–9, pl. 5), which were influenced by Sasanian silk textiles featuring a similar design (Stauffer 1992, 119–31). These Sasanian textiles show a pattern framework composed of pearl roundels that are joined by small buttons on the point of contact (Harper 1978, 134–35, no. 59). Each pearl roundel encloses a single animal or bird, and the single figures are usually rendered in a repetitive or symmetrical manner. The design on the Sasanian textiles appears closer to the ornament on the Mshatta façade than the Egyptian textiles and Middle Eastern mosaics, even though the decoration with grape vines and birds around and inside the circles on the façade is less repetitive than that of the Sasanian models. On the mosaics and the late antique Egyptian textiles, the small loops joining the circles always create a space between the

individual roundels which is found neither at Mshatta, nor on the Sasanian textiles. Furthermore, the circles on the mosaics and most textiles from the Byzantine realm lack the decoration with a string of beads so prominent at Mshatta. Even though the exact origin of this geometric design cannot be determined with absolute certainty, other motifs on the Mshatta façade, such as the *senmurv* and the winged palmettes, are so explicitly Iranian that they without doubt were deliberately transferred from Sasanian models.

A similar juxtaposition of late antique and Sasanian elements as in Mshatta can be found in the interior mosaic decoration of the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem, erected on the site of Solomon's temple already in 691–92 by the Umayyad caliph Abd al-Malik (ruled 685–705). Its decoration is very similar to Mshatta, as it seems equally close to Graeco-Roman models. The gilded glass mosaics which cover almost all interior walls of the rotunda at first sight appear as an equivalent to mosaics from late antique Italy or Byzantium in their motifs, colours, and style. In contrast to the late antique examples though, the ornaments of the Dome of the Rock are characterized by the absence of living beings that were so frequent in contemporary church decorations. Furthermore, the acanthus scrolls in Jerusalem are enriched by an item, growing from the central vase, that consists of a kind of winged palmette, topped by a cone-like element, the same motif that on the Mshatta façade has been identified as being of Sasanian origin. Grabar interpreted these winged palmettes in the Dome of the Rock as images of the Sasanian crown and noted that the scrolls, especially in the mosaics on the inner octagons, are adorned with further jewels resembling those worn by emperors, empresses, the Virgin Mary, and the saints in late antique and Byzantine mosaics. As Grabar points out, these pieces of jewellery were symbols of power, sovereignty, and holiness in the official art of the Byzantine and Sasanian Empire. Both empires were overcome in the course of the Islamic Expansion. The Byzantine territories in the Levant, formerly ruled by Arab vassal princes, fell to the Islamic Empire as early as 635–40, and the Sasanian Empire was completely defeated in 651 (see Noth 2001, 58–61, for the historical framework). With these conquests, the Islamic rulers had defeated *the* two major powers in the late antique world. Grabar compares the images of jewellery in the Dome of the Rock to the crowns and other royal insignia sent to the Kaaba in Mecca by central Asian rulers who had submitted themselves and converted to Islam. The jewellery depicted in the mosaics in the Dome of the Rock therefore was a demonstration of the defeat of “unbelievers” that had been subjected to the Islamic Empire and the new faith (Grabar 1973, 58–61; Grabar 2005b, 21–24, 27–34).

The similarity of the mosaics in the Dome of the Rock to late

antique models is by no way coincidental. There actually is evidence of mosaicists from Byzantium working on prestigious Umayyad building projects, such as the mosques at Medina and Damascus. In regard to the construction of the mosque of Medina, two sources record the involvement of Byzantine workmen, the history of Medina by Ibn Zabala written in 814 and the account by the Persian historian and theologian Al-Tabari from the early 10th century. Both report that the caliph al-Walid I wrote to the Byzantine Emperor in 707 and asked for assistance in constructing the mosque; the emperor hence sent his Islamic antagonist a divergent number of workmen, several loads of mosaic cubes, and quite a sum of gold for the building project (Gibb 1958, 225, 228–29; At-Tabari 1883–1885, 1194). As for the Great Mosque of Damascus, the geographer al-Maqdisi records in a short note that mosaicists and implements were sent by the Byzantine emperor (Gibb 1958, 225). As the Dome of the Rock already showed, the imported mosaicists did not adopt their Byzantine designs without alterations though (Grabar 2005a, 25). The mosaics of the Great Mosque of Damascus, although featuring the same acanthus scrolls and especially architectural elevations as in Roman wall painting and late antique mosaics (Förtsch 1993), do not show living beings.

In analogy to the evidence on Byzantine craftsmen, there are sources on workers from Egypt, where the tradition of carving relief sculpture was still vivid in Late Antiquity until the Early Islamic period. The so-called Aphrodito Papyri, found in 1901 at Kom Ishgau near Sohag in Egypt, are contemporary records that workmen were sent from the Egyptian province to assist on the construction sites of the caliph al-Walid I (ruled 705–15) at the Great Mosque of Damascus and the al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem (Creswell 1939, 30–32; Küchler 1992; Talgam 2004, 38).³ In the al-Aqsa Mosque, the carved wooden panels (Talgam 2004, fig. 87–88) clearly reveal the influence of late antique Egyptian woodwork and might well have been manufactured by Egyptian artists. A fragment on Egyptian workers from the history of the Coptic patriarchate of Alexandria compiled by Severus Ibn al-Muqaffa in the mid-10th century has even been related to Mshatta. Severus records that al-Walid II (ruled 743–44) called workers from all (Egyptian) provinces to build a city in the desert, 15 miles away from the next source of water. Even the numerous caravans could not supply the workers with enough water, and many of them died of thirst. Only the assassination of al-Walid II brought the building project to an abrupt halt, and the workers could return home. Since the Umayyads' main building activities were located in the Palestinian-Syrian region and Mshatta was evidently left unfinished, this source has traditionally been related to our palace and was thus used to date it (Creswell 1969, 639; Grabar 2005a, 152, 154; both

with older literature). Yet doubts remain whether the identification and thus the attribution to al-Walid II are correct, not only because the Egyptian chronicle was written two centuries after the recounted episode, and the geographic location of Mshatta was originally less remote from any source of water than described (Grabar 2005a, 154; Bujard 2008, 29–30). Regardless whether this account tells the story of the construction of Mshatta or not, it is at least another reference for Egyptian workers at Umayyad building projects.

The presence of Egyptian workers might explain the use of late antique Egyptian elements such as the vine leave with overlaid grapes at Mshatta (Fig. 15.5).⁴ For Persian craftsmen working on Umayyad construction sites there is no equivalent written evidence. The clearly altered physiognomy – in comparison to the Sasanian models – of the *senmurv* and winged palmette on the façade supports the hypothesis that there were no workers from the former Sasanian area involved at Mshatta. Instead, these motifs will have been copied from portable works of minor art, coins, or maybe even pattern books, as cited above. The same mode of transfer, of course, might also be true for the late antique Egyptian elements on the façade, which might explain, why the vine leaves with overlaid grapes find their closest parallels on ivory and wood carvings.

As concerns the artists from Byzantium, they apparently had an extremely high reputation. By employing Byzantine mosaicists, the Umayyad caliph could therefore present himself as a cosmopolitan sovereign at the height of fashion and could furthermore demonstrate his status towards his subjects and among the contemporary rulers. As the famous “fresco of the six kings” in the audience hall of Qusayr Amra demonstrates, the Umayyad caliph wanted to be equal, if not superior, to the leaders of his time. The bath house Qusayr Amra, probably erected in the first half of the 8th century by an unknown princely patron (Fowden 2004, 142–63), is famous for its rich wall paintings with motifs derived from a Graeco-Roman tradition. The fresco of interest shows six male figures, clad in opulent robes, standing in two rows of three. All are stretching out their open right hand towards an enthroned personage with a nimbus, portrayed in the central alcove of the audience hall, who has commonly been interpreted as the Umayyad caliph. The six men are distinguished by different kinds of lavish headgear, as well as by inscriptions in Greek and Arabic above their heads. Four of the inscriptions have survived and give the names of monarchs of the late antique world: Kaisar, the Byzantine Emperor, Roderic, the king of the Spanish Visigoths before the Islamic conquest, Chosroes, the Sasanian King of Kings defeated by the Arabs, and Negus, the king of Ethiopia. These kings, by their gesture of the outstretched hand, are paying their respect to the

Umayyad caliph. Initially, this fresco was interpreted as a depiction of six enemies defeated by the Umayyads (Creswell 1969, 400). This interpretation does not completely fit the image though, as the Negus was not among the sovereigns defeated in the course of the Islamic Expansion (Grabar 1973, 46–47). The Byzantine Emperor as well was not completely overcome by the Umayyads, and, although he lost some of his territory to the Islamic Empire, rather remained an opponent of equal rank and respect, as the above mentioned communication on the borrowed artisans show. Hence, the interpretation as a portrait of the global “family of kings” (Grabar 1973, 47–48) is more convincing. Similar to modern group pictures of politicians, the Umayyad caliph is shown side by side with the important leaders of the world in Late Antiquity, yet not simply as an equal, but at a certain distance from them in a dominant position (Grabar 1973, 48; Hillenbrand 1999, 32).

As the fresco from Qusayr Amra illustrates, the new Islamic rulers with their young empire strived to be part of the world order of their time and at best even superior to the contemporary sovereigns. The use of Greek next to Arabic in the bilingual inscriptions reveals the international recipients of the fresco’s message (on these two languages in the Umayyad state, see Fowden 2004, 265–72). That diplomatic contacts and courtesies continuously existed between the Byzantine and Islamic monarchs, despite the constant warfare between them, is attested in some, though scarce literary accounts (Gibb 1958, 229–31). For the Umayyad caliphs, being a member of the “exclusive club of world leaders” (Fowden 2004, 32) went much further though. It meant stepping into the long, important history of the rival empires. The caliph al-Malik (ruled 685–705) revived the tradition of Alexander the Great, actually followed the paths of the legendary Macedonian king, and tried to locate some of the sites he had visited (Finster 2001, 387–88). The caliph Yazid III (ruled 744) even created his own imaginary ancestry including the Sasanian King of Kings and the Byzantine Caesar, as Al-Tabari records in his *Annals* (Grabar 1973, 47–48; Al-Tabari 1885–1889, 1874). This genealogy, of course, has no basis in fact, but it reveals the general wish of the Umayyad rulers to be part of the global history of the great empires of Late Antiquity. In that sense, the kings portrayed in the fresco at Qusayr Amra symbolize the cultural and political heritage the Muslim leaders strived to step into (Fowden 2004, 198).

The attitude exemplified by the fresco at Qusayr Amra and the imaginary genealogy of Yazid III was not limited to fictional literary and artistic expressions, but entered into the administration and royal representation of the Islamic Empire. The Umayyads maintained elements of the Byzantine state organisation in the former Byzantine

provinces, such as the revenue administration and the upkeep of the roads, and even imitated Roman milestones (Gibb 1958, 223–24; Fowden 2004, 269–70). The early gold coinage of the Umayyads copied Byzantine designs with, in contrast to later Islamic coins, a portrait of the caliph, and in Iraq, Iran, and further eastern areas, the Umayyads copied Sasanian silver coins that continued to show the effigy of the King of Kings, until between 695 and 697 the Byzantine and Sasanian coin types were replaced by coins bearing Quranic epigraphy (Hillenbrand 1999, 19–24). Especially strong was the influence of the Sasanian traditions on the court ceremonial and representation of the Early Islamic period, as after the conquest of the Sasanian Empire, the Arab elite adopted status symbols and lifestyle of the old Iranian aristocracy (Morony 2004, 282–84). The new Islamic Empire's historical traditions, court representation, and political administration were therefore constructed from various influences from the empires that had previously been dominant in the area now under Islamic rule and whose territories through conquest had been incorporated into the Islamic world.

As shown above, the same is true for early Islamic art. The various influences identified in the architectural decoration of Mshatta as in other monuments of the same period go along well with the formation of state representation and organisation in the Islamic Empire. Two factors are crucial for the creation of the new artistic expression: First, the rich artistic traditions and vital workshop activities in the conquered areas and neighbouring Byzantine Empire secured the availability of artists, trained in different cultural environments, that the Umayyad rulers could draw upon. Therefore, late antique Egypt, conquered in 639–642, with its vital artistic activity had such a strong impact on the canon of motifs merged into early Islamic art. Secondly, it was a deliberate decision of the Umayyad patrons to shape the artistic tradition along the models of the most important political powers of Late Antiquity, now incorporated into the Islamic territory, in analogy to the administration and court ceremonial. At Mshatta, this conscious decision becomes evident by the Sasanian motifs that were so obviously not worked by Iranian artists, but were copied from some kind of representation imported from Persia. The consciousness of the selection is also apparent, because the different elements taken from late antique Middle Eastern or Egyptian art, as well as from Sasanian models were not simply juxtaposed as single alien components. As not only the intertwined circles superimposed on the grape vine decoration in the first triangle on the Mshatta façade or the winged palmettes integrated into the vine tendrils show, motifs of different origin were merged into one coherent design and adjusted to fit into a new overall early Islamic layout. In this way, the Umayyads

not only presented themselves as the heirs of the great empires, but also as the creators of a new common cultural environment and identity (similarly Talgam 2004, 124).

This formation of an artistic expression finds some parallels in other young empires of antiquity. In the Lombard kingdom in 6th–8th century Italy – almost contemporary to Umayyad rule in the Middle East – the development of art and architecture is very similar to the process reconstructed above for early Islamic art. Almost all elements used in the decoration of the Lombard buildings can be traced back to Graeco-Roman, early Christian or even Sasanian models, but no single older monument is comparable in its entirety. Furthermore, the single motifs were seldom copied exactly, but were almost always slightly altered and combined in a distinctly non-antique manner. Similar to the practice in the Umayyad Empire, workers of different origin seem to have been active on the Lombard construction sites. Like the Umayyads, the Lombard patrons could not look back on a long tradition of rulership, but were mostly *homines novi* and therefore under the pressure to legitimize their role in society. One possible mode to represent their new status was their art and architecture, which therefore had to be the most beautiful and prestigious available at the time (Jäggi 1998, 244–52). A rich interior decoration characterizes, for example, the so-called *tempietto* in Cividale, probably constructed even later than Mshatta in the 2nd half of the 8th century. It incorporates diverse stylistic models, as well as different materials such as stone sculpture, wall painting, an *opus sectile* floor and statues and architectural decoration carved in stucco as in some of the other Umayyad desert castles discussed above (on the comparison between the *Tempietto* of Cividale and the Umayyad desert castles see L'Orange and Torp 1979, 56–59). The abundance of decoration on the façades of other monuments, such as S. Salvatore in Spoleto or the temple of Clitumnus, carved in stone as at Mshatta, is an even clearer reflection of the patrons' desire to demonstrate their economic power to the outside (Jäggi 1998, 250).

The same kind of process can already be found much earlier, in Augustan Rome, in the time when the Principate with the *primus inter pares* had just replaced the old Republican order. In Augustan art, archaisms and classicisms were merged to create a distinct style drawing on a glorious past with its respective connotations (Zanker 1968, 11–12; Zanker 1997, 240–63). Augustus' effort to comprise the whole Greek and Roman history in his empire becomes most evident on his forum. Not only was it erected with different kinds of marble from all over the empire (Zanker 1968, 12; Ganzert 1996, 286–87; Galinsky 1996, 202–3, following Ganzert). Furthermore, the architectural decoration recalled the style of famous Greek

monuments, such as the Erechtheion, yet incorporating it into Roman architectural forms (Ganzert 1996, 285–86, 289; Galinsky 1996, 200, 202). This encyclopaedic display of material and ornament has been interpreted by J. Ganzert as supplementary to the statuary programme of the forum (Ganzert 1996, 286–87). In the statuary decoration, which formed an integral part of the forum's plan, Augustus – like later the Umayyad caliphs – created his own mythical ancestry beginning with Aeneas, comprising all the *summi viri* up to his time, friend and foe united, and finally ending with himself as the culmination of Roman history (Zanker 1968, 14–18, 20; Zanker 1997, 213–16; Galinsky 1996, 199–200, 204, 206). In further adorning his forum with two paintings of Alexander the Great by Apelles, Augustus related to the Macedonian king (Zanker 1968, 23–24; Galinsky 1996, 199–200, 208), like later al-Malik in the 7th century. The great success of Augustus' genealogical manifestation made it an archetype for the self-representation of later rulers (Geiger 2008). Altogether, the decoration of the forum demonstrated not only the enormous extent of the territory of the Imperium Romanum, reinvigorated after a long period of civil wars, but also the empire's and the emperor's power to gain world supremacy and to maintain peace (Ganzert 1996, 292).

In a similar manner, the different motifs on the Mshatta façade, as on other Umayyad monuments, are used to demonstrate the extent and power of the Islamic Empire. The different elements of antique architecture and iconography were combined and draped on the façade as a carved tapestry in a new manner alien to its forerunners. The elements of different origin were merged into one consistent design that yet left the single components clearly distinguishable in an encyclopaedic manner. This way, it was possible to efficiently represent the different regions – and former empires – with their great history, the Byzantine Middle East, Sasanian Persia, and Egypt, all now incorporated into the Islamic territory, and to illustrate the unifying quality of the Islamic Empire. This is how the Umayyads created an artistic expression that relied on and continued the ancient traditions, yet was innovative enough to symbolize the global new beginning brought by the rule of Islam.

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1 This topic is far too vast to be discussed here, but will be considered in the final publication of the project.

2 This structure of the wings becomes particularly clear on the two winged horses lead by young men on a silver plate from the 6th-7th century in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, for example, or the partridge on a stucco plaque from the 2nd half of the 7th century or the 8th century in the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston (Harper 1978, 42–43, 117).

3 Further sources on Egyptian and Byzantine workmen employed on the construction sites of al-Walid are quoted in Creswell 1939, 32.

4 This element also occurs on the wooden panels in the al-Aqsa Mosque at Jerusalem (Talgam 2004, fig. 87–88; see above). Talgam, on stylistic grounds, even arrives at the conclusion that the architectural decoration of Mshatta was actually worked by Coptic artisans or artists trained in the Coptic tradition (Talgam 2004, 109); this hypothesis is supported by the sculptural technique used at Mshatta, which is very similar to late antique Egyptian stone carving.



Plate 1. Catacombe di Priscilla, Roma, affresco con Orante (foto: Pontificia Commissione di Archeologia Sacra).



Plate 2. Basilica di Ss. Cosma e Damiano, Roma, mosaico absidale di Cristo tra Pietro e Paolo, che presentano i Ss., Cosma e Damiano (526–530) (foto: Pontificia Commissione di Archeologia Sacra).

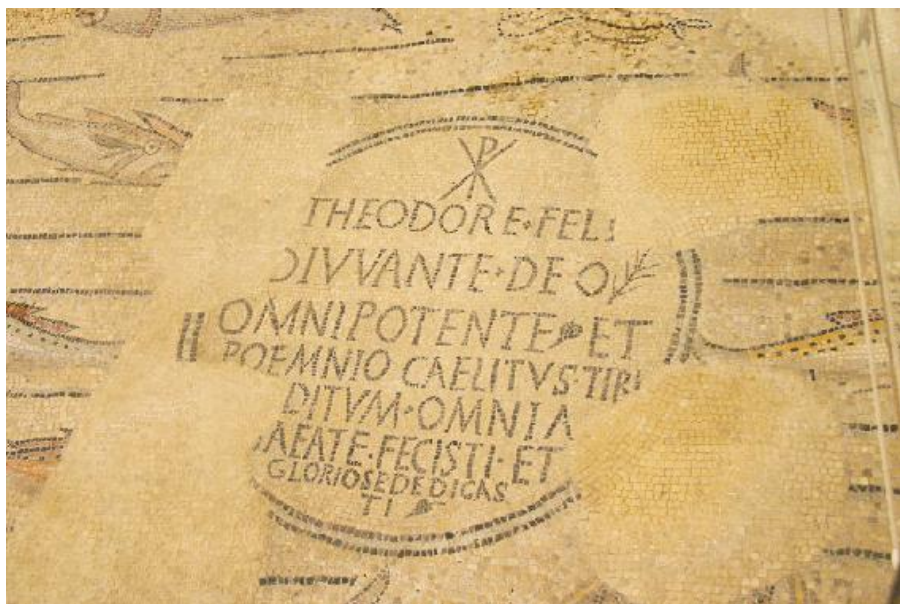


Plate 3. Mosaicopavimentale dell'aula meridionale del vescovo Teodoro, Aquileia (inizi IVsec.), ILS 1863 (foto: A. Marcone).



Plate 4. Roma, Arco della basilica pelagiana di S. Lorenzo f.l.m. (579–590) (foto: Pontificia Commissione di Archeologia Sacra).



Plate 5. Temple of Venus and Roma (photo: E. R. Varner).

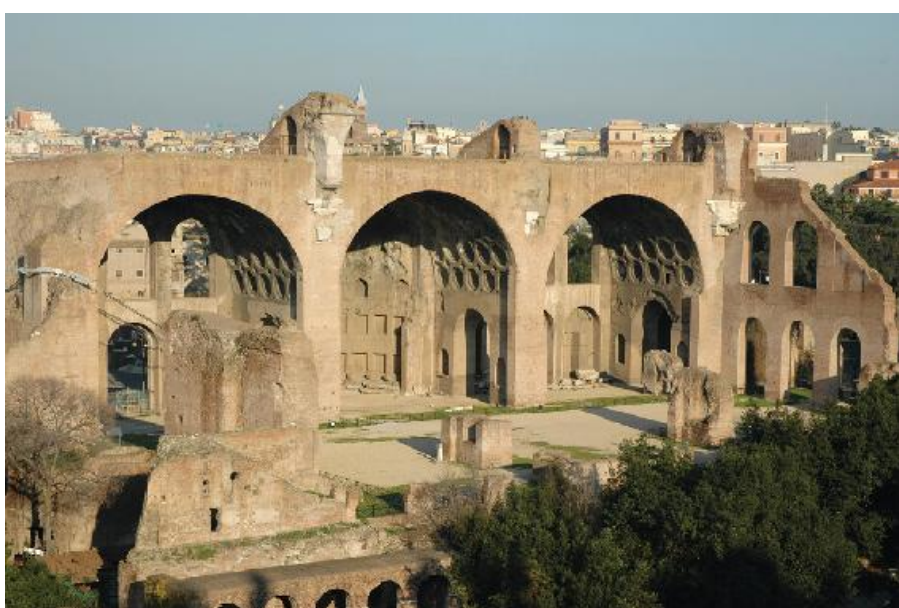


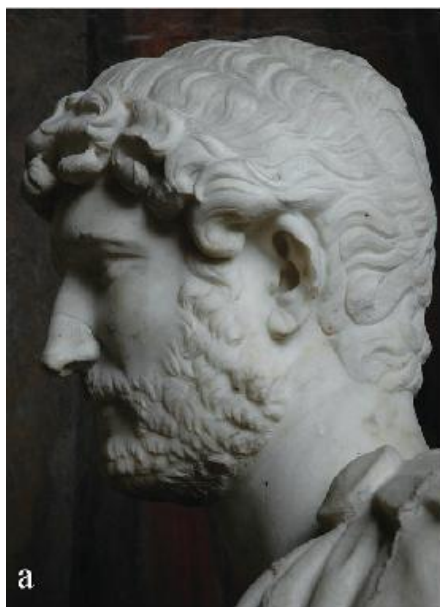
Plate 6. Basilica of Maxentius and Constantine (photo: E. R. Varner).



Plate 7. "Temple of Romulus" (photo: E. R. Varner).



Plate 8. Hadrian/Maxentius/Constantine, Rome, Palazzo dei Conservatori, Cortile, inv. 1622 (photo: E. R. Varner).



Plates 9a. Hadrian, Rome, Palazzo Altemps, inv. 8618, 9b. Hadrian/Maxentius/Constantine, Rome, Palazzo dei Conservatori, Cortile, inv. 1622 (photos: E. R. Varner).



Plate 10. Domitian/Constantine, Rome, Mercati Traianei, inv. FT 10037 (photo: E. R. Varner).



Plate 11. Augustus/Constantine, Viterbo, Museo Nazionale Etrusco, inv. 104973 (photo: A. van den Hoek).

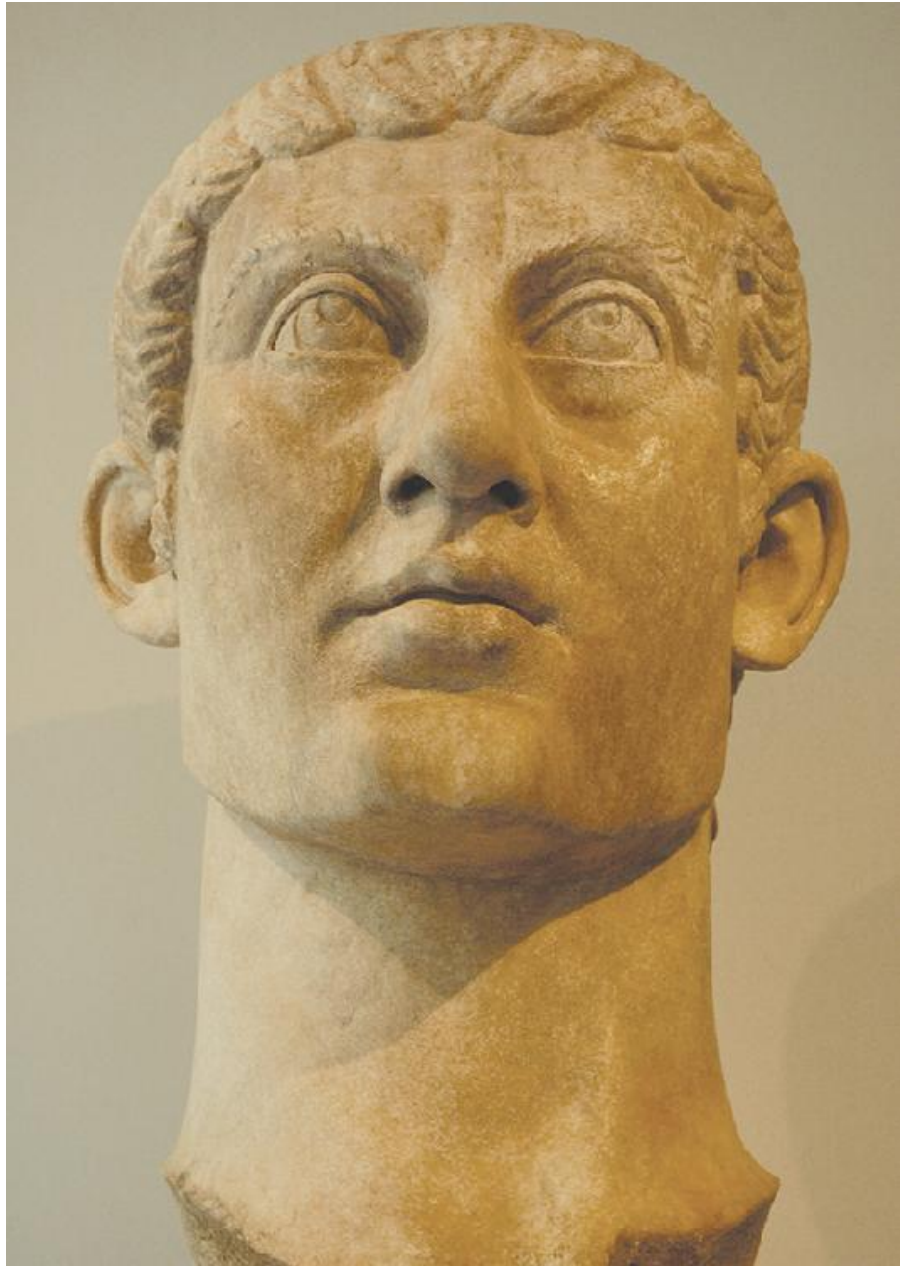


Plate 12. Trajan/Constantine, New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, inv. 26.229 (photo: E. R. Varner).



Plate 13. Head of an Emperor ("Beyazit Head"), Istanbul Archaeological Museum, inv. 5028 (photo: S. Bassett).



Plate 14. Togatus, Istanbul Archaeological Museum, inv. 769 (photo: S. Bassett).



Plate 15. *Togatus* (detail showing alabaster) Istanbul Archaeological Museum, inv. 769 (photo: S. Bassett).

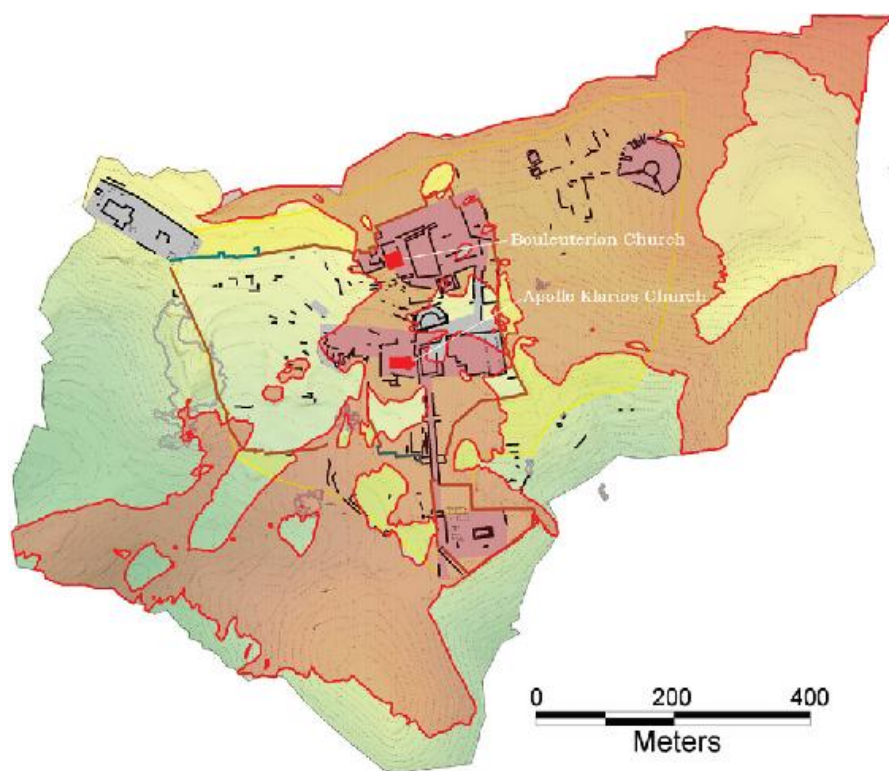


Plate 16. Map indicating the visibility of the Bouleuterion Church and the Apollo Klarios Church at Sagalassos. One or both were visible from the areas indicated in red (© The Sagalassos Archaeological Research Project).



Plate 17. The Zeus Temple at Aizanoi (photo: I. Jacobs).



Plate 18. The "Theodosian" frieze of the Temple of Hadrian at Ephesus (photo: I. Jacobs).



Plate 19. The Temple of Zeus at the end of the sightline of the Cardo of Gerasa (photo: I. Jacobs).



*Plate 20. The entrance complex of the Temple of Artemis at Gerasa framing the *Cardo* (photo: I. Jacobs).*

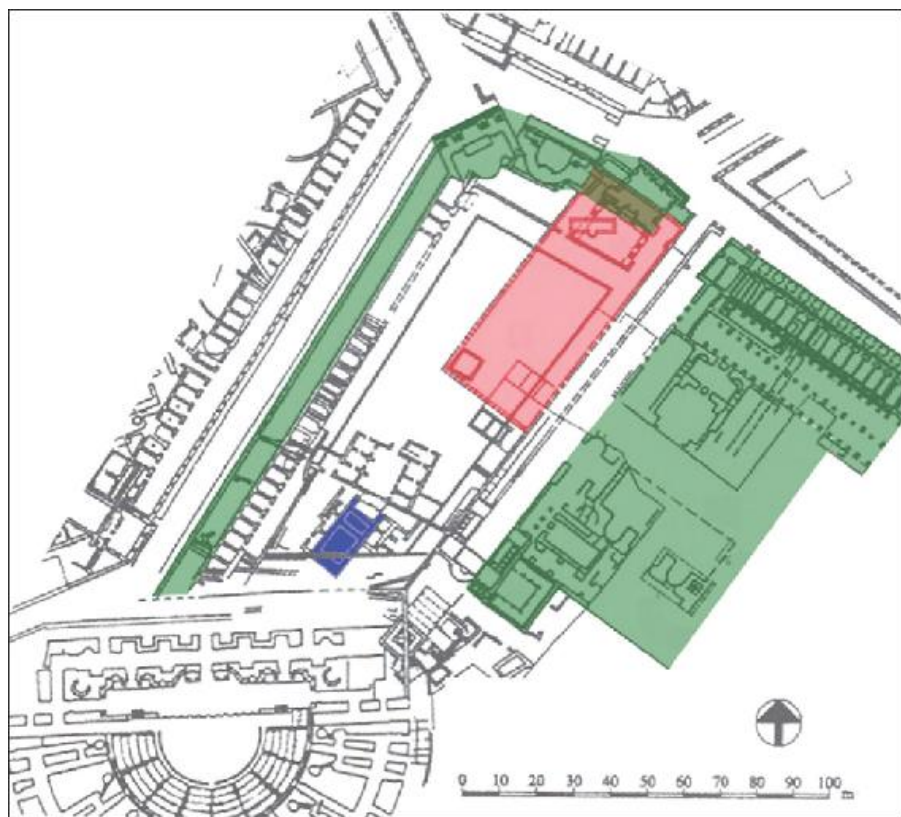


Plate 21. The dilapidation of the basilica (red) and the temple complex (blue) in the city centre of Skythopolis took place behind the back walls of Palladius Street and the East Baths (green, after Tsafirir 2003, pl. 107, detail).

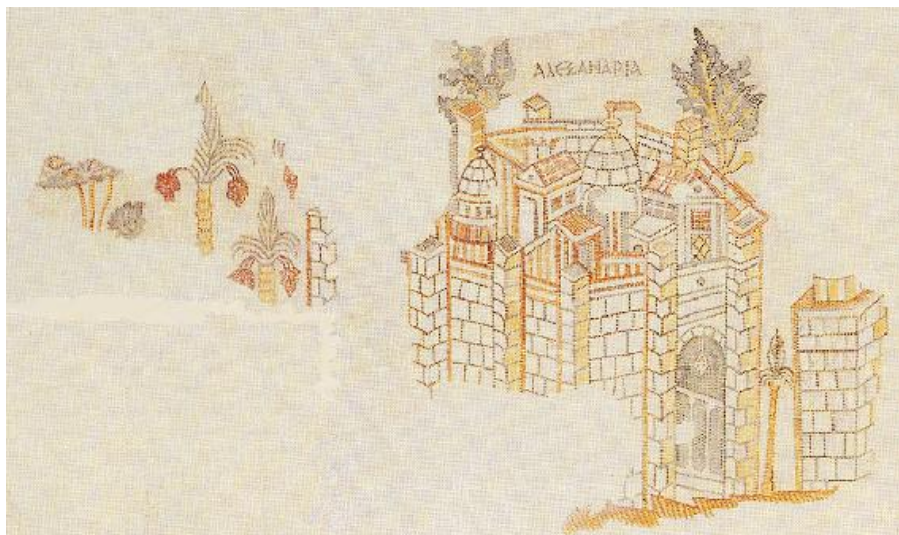


Plate 22. Watercolor copy of the Alexandria mosaic from the church of St John the Baptist at Gerasa, 531 (McKenzie 2007, 252).



Plate 23. Jerusalem in the Madaba Map Mosaic, second half of the 6th century (Wikimedia Commons).

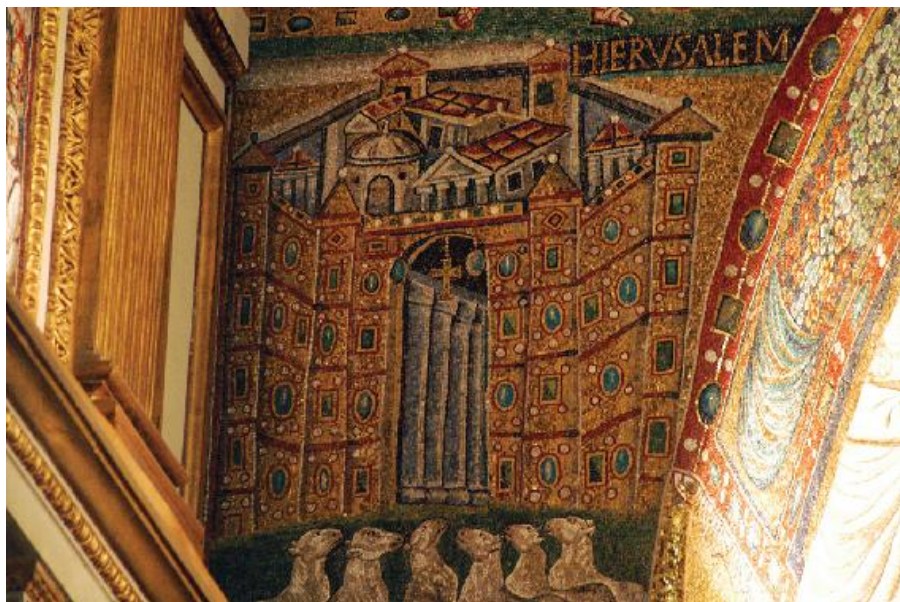


Plate 24. Jerusalem on the triumphal arch at S. Maria Maggiore in Rome, ca. 440 (photo: H. Dey).



Plate 25. Jerusalem on the triumphal arch at the oratory of San Vincenzo, Rome, 640s (photo: H. Dey).

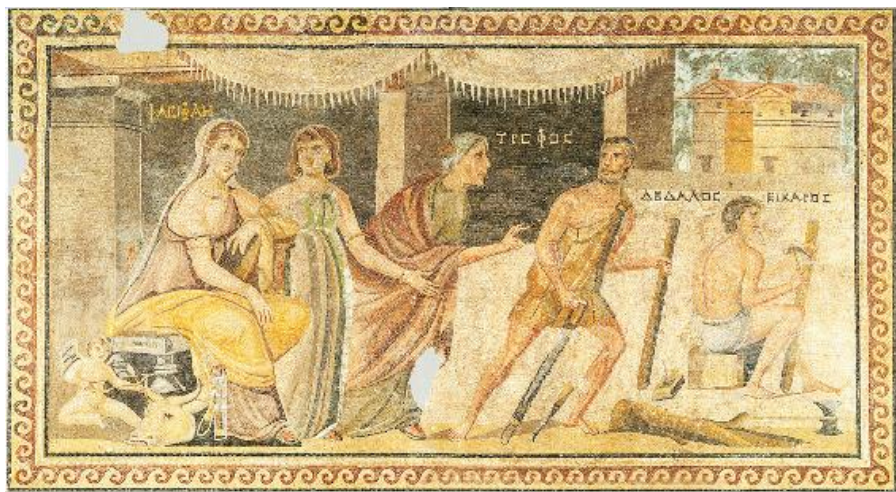


Plate 26. Zeugma, House of Poseidon, mosaic of Daedalus and Pasiphae (photo: Alain Clary, courtesy J.-P. Darmon).

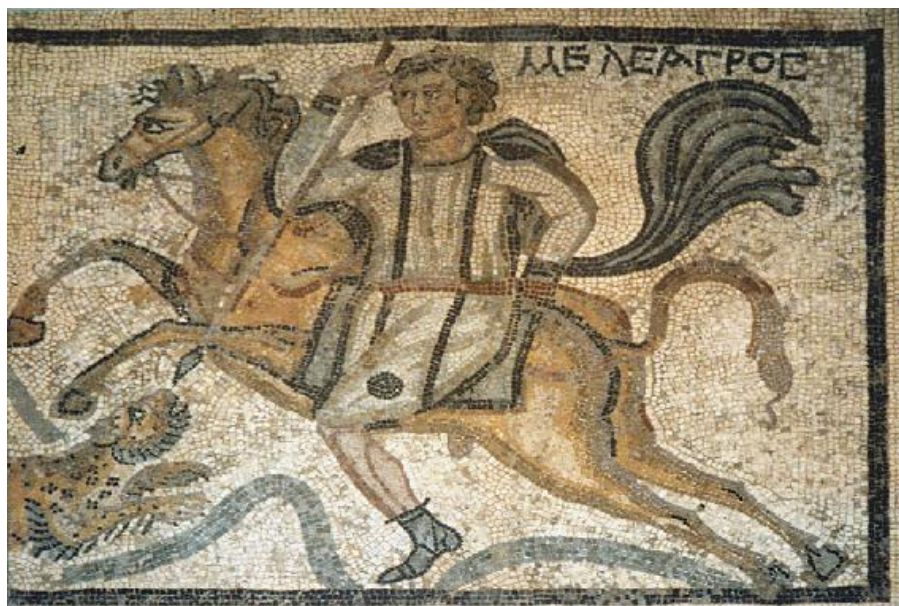


Plate 27. Halikarnassos, House of Charidemus, Meleager (photo: B. Poulsen).



Plate 28. Pastore dall'abito singolare, Aquileia, oratorio del buon pastore.



Plate 29. Vittoria eucaristica, Basilica, Aquileia.

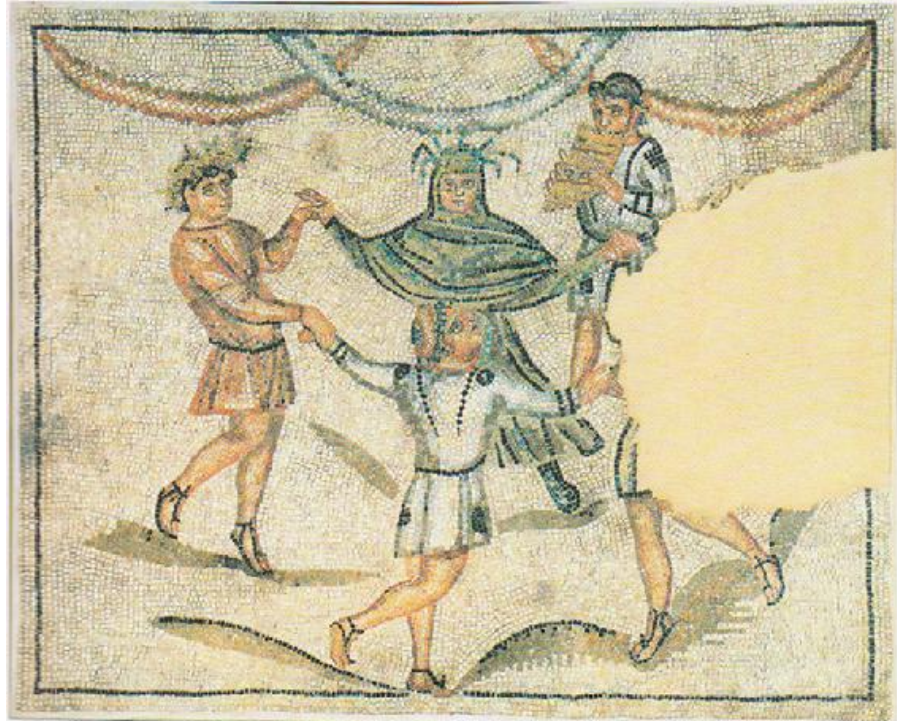
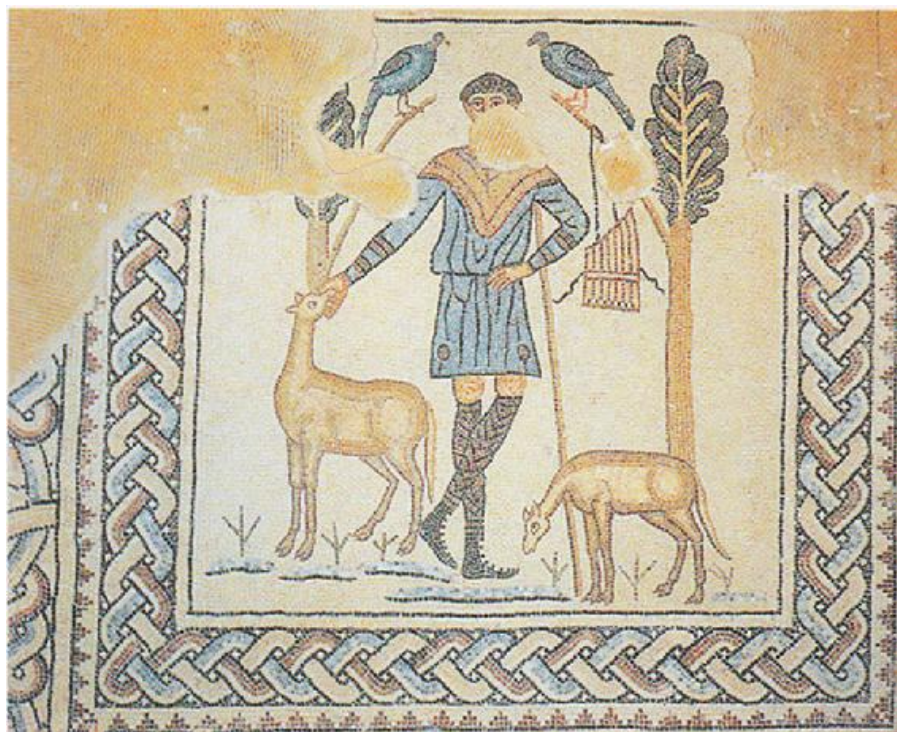


Plate 30. Danza delle stagioni, Ravenna (foto: Montecchi 2004, fig. 156).



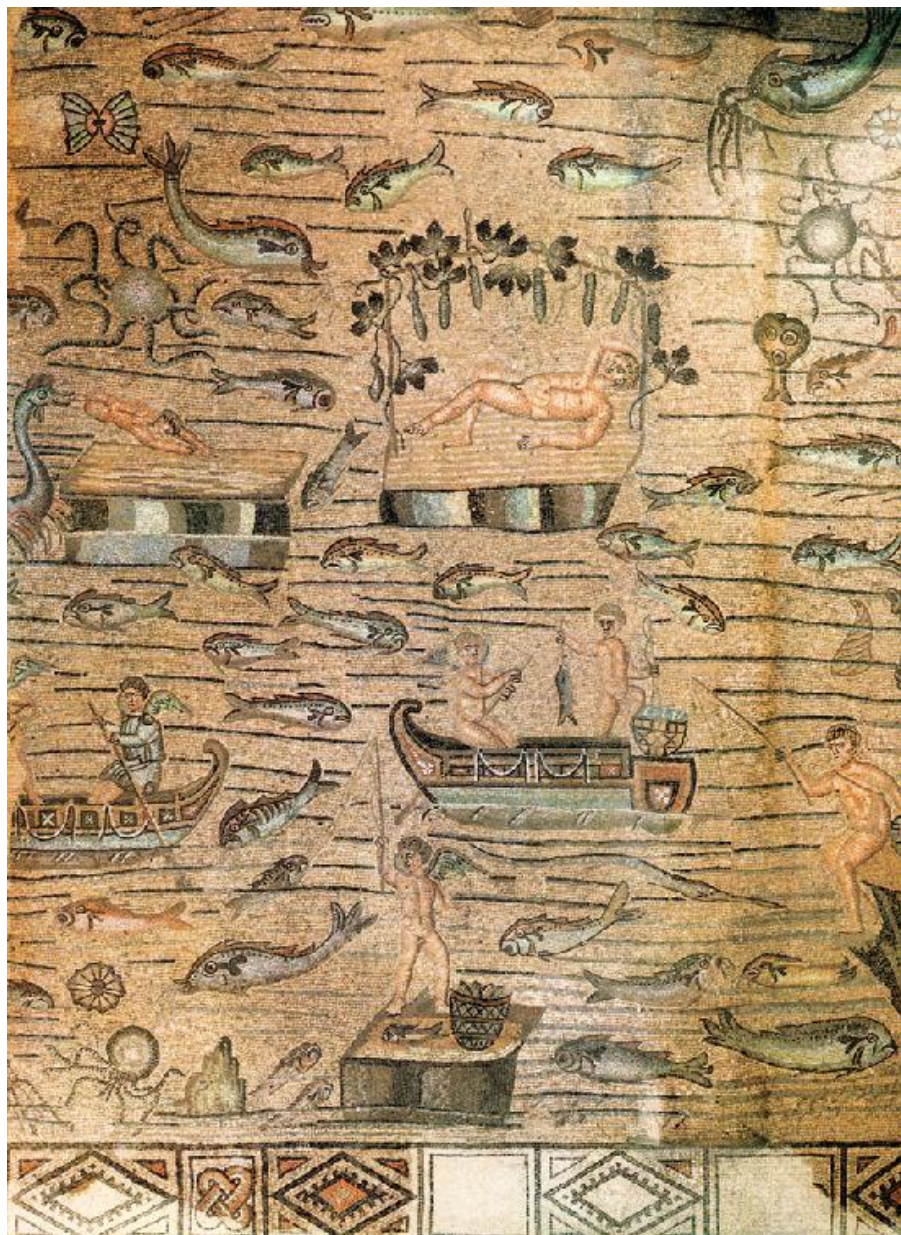


Plate 32. *Giona*, Aquileia, aula teodorian meridionale.